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Between resistance and assimilation : rural Nahua women in the valley of Toluca in the early eighteenth century

Pizzigoni, Caterina

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**Between Resistance and Assimilation: Rural Nahua Women in the
Valley of Toluca in the Early Eighteenth Century**
Caterina Pizzigoni, King's College London, PhD

2002

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The thesis analyses the reaction of rural Nahua women to the impact of Spanish cultural hegemony in terms of resistance to and assimilation of the new cultural models imposed by colonial authorities. Special attention is paid to the Catholic Church since in rural areas the clergy were important agents of Spanish colonial power.

The study focuses on the Valley of Toluca, immediately west of Mexico City. It has been chosen for study due to its proximity to the core of the Spanish empire and the fact that in the early eighteenth century its population remained predominantly indigenous. The study is based primarily on documents in both Spanish and the indigenous language, Nahuatl, that were associated mainly with the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca, a court created by the archbishop of Mexico to deal with moral and doctrinal matters. This hitherto unknown documentation is used to examine women's everyday life in a rural area. In doing so it assesses the impact of the Christian model of life on their activities and behaviour. Evidence for the Christian model that the Spanish attempted to impose is drawn from books of sermons, confessionals and catechisms used in the eighteenth century, together with the reports of inspections (*Libros de visita*) that archbishops carried out in the area.

The thesis shows the extent to which rural areas were able to preserve traditional values despite the efforts of the Church to assimilate them into colonial society.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

When Hernando Cortés and his expedition conquered the Nahuas in 1519-21, he probably did not envision that the role played in their triumph by indigenous women, including the interpreter Marina¹, was only the beginning of a basic relationship between women and conquerors. In fact, native women played a key role in Spanish penetration into the New World. As informal partners of Spaniards, they often mediated between two cultures and languages, facilitating the conquerors' understanding of the native world. However, at the same time women developed forms of resistance that favoured the preservation of ancient traditions. Their controversial and complex role has often been underestimated in the analysis of the impact of Spanish colonisation.

Historiographical Background and Key Concepts

Many explanations have been given for the success the Spanish had in subjugating the Nahuas. In this respect it is necessary to consider the cultural hegemony the Spanish achieved, that is, a domination that is based not simply on violence and relationships of force, but on more subtle social mechanisms. It would have been impossible for the Spanish to dominate the large native population of Mexico merely through military power and bureaucratic control, or due to the fall in native population as a consequence of the spread of Old World diseases. Many scholars have attempted to explain the colonial impact through Spanish cultural hegemony. Among them, an earlier group of academics such as George M. Foster, François Chevalier, Robert Ricard, and Woodrow Borah maintained that the conquest radically changed Indian society. Other scholars, for example James Lockhart, Sarah Cline, Robert Haskett and Serge Gruzinski, although recognising change, have also stressed the importance of cultural continuity, underlining how the Indians managed to preserve various aspects

¹ In Nahuatl Malintzin, and in contemporary Spanish Malinche.

of their culture.² The present research can be situated within this field, with an emphasis on the cultural synthesis that ended in a kind of Spanish cultural dominance without denying the Nahuas an active role.³

The project stands at the juncture of ethnohistory and women's history, two fields which have accounted for a great deal of the vitality in Latin American history recently. Following the path opened by James Lockhart, a group of scholars has brought fresh ideas and methodology to early Mexican ethnohistory, exploiting indigenous-language sources, and making considerable progress in the knowledge and understanding of early Latin American history.⁴ They have tended to focus on the early colonial period, while attempts to study the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries have been extremely scarce.⁵ It is true that women's history in Latin America has developed significantly for the late colonial period, as is explained in detail below. However, attention has been focused mainly on *criollo* and *mestizo* women, while indigenous women in Mexico have been little studied, and emphasis has been placed on the influence that colonial authorities had on them, particularly the Church, while there has been less concern with social reality. The aim of the thesis is to apply the

² The scholars above mentioned have produced many studies, here those specifically referring to Spanish cultural hegemony are listed: George M. Foster, *Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1960); François Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: the Great Hacienda* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963); Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966); Woodrow Borah, *Justice by Insurance: the General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: a Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); S. L. Cline, *Colonial Culhuacan 1580-1600. A Social History of an Aztec Town* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: an Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991); Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico. The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World 16th-18th Centuries* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993). For discussion of the development of postconquest Mesoamerican ethnohistory, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 2-5, and *Nahuas and Spaniards* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 159-82.

³ See Lockhart's concept of "double mistaken identity" in James Lockhart, *Of Things of the Indies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 98-119; and Susan Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture 1500-1700* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), Introduction.

⁴ For example the already mentioned Cline, *Colonial Culhuacan*, and Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*; then Rebecca Horn, "Gender and Social Identity. Nahuatl Naming Patterns", in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, edited by Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

⁵ For example, Stephanie Wood, "Matters of Life at Death. Nahuatl Testaments of Rural Women, 1589-1801", in *Indian Women*, pp. 165-82.

advances in ethnohistorical methodology to a close study of indigenous women and their world in the late colonial period, at the same time developing that methodology further. In particular, the study is limited to the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, using the Bourbon Reforms as a watershed; it is quite an unexplored period of time for this topic, since scholars' attention has concentrated on open rebellions and on the disruptions provoked by the Bourbons. With the implementation of the Reforms and the expulsion of the Jesuits from the colonies in 1767, the institutional framework underwent significant changes, so that the last forty years of the century can be considered apart.

The thesis will focus on the everyday lives of indigenous women of central Mexico from the combined perspectives of resistance to and assimilation of the model that the Church tried to impose upon them. Thus it is worth analysing briefly the kind of power that the Church exercised in the process.

Pastoral Power

Throughout the colonial period, the Spanish Crown looked to the Catholic Church to help impose its cultural hegemony and incorporate the Indians into the new system of values and beliefs. Actually, the Crown and the Church were linked by a set of mutual interests, since the King initially needed to justify the conquest through the spread of the Christian faith in the new lands, and the clergy required royal military and financial support for their activities. This link became effective through the *Patronato Real*, according to which the Spanish kings provided support for Church activity and in turn could appoint colonial bishops, clergy and religious officers.⁶ Both the Crown and the Church were united in the objective of converting the natives into disciplined and orderly subjects and believers. But the achievement of this goal implied the establishment of a structure. The King was distant and personally unknown to the Indians of the New World, so his authority required intermediates to be effective.

⁶ Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism. Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 147-9, 155, 158.

Spanish priests therefore played key roles as agents of colonial rule at the local level and especially in rural areas, where there were far fewer Spaniards.⁷

The regular and secular clergy put into practice what can be described as pastoral power to implement the Christian model of life. This power emphasised discipline, rules to be learnt, and punishment for transgression, as it has been described by Lynn A. Blake in the context of British Columbia in the nineteenth century. Her theorisation refers to another geographical region and another period of time, but it offers an interesting view of religious power in cultural matters.⁸ Through pastoral power the Church helped the State in forging subjects and believers. To achieve the task, the clergy used various instruments such as preaching, confession, education through schools and inspections that the archbishops or their representatives carried out sporadically. In theory, confession was the most significant instrument of pastoral power, for it was a direct expression of what the Church approved or banned. Confession was based on a power relationship, since it involved the presence of the authority that required the confession to judge, punish and forgive. Moreover, it represented for the person confessing a personal and active admission of failure and weakness in respecting the rules, as well as the wish to be reincorporated into the system, thus bringing the individual in confrontation with religious power. This confrontation allowed the Church to identify those behaviours that were outside the norm, bringing them under control.⁹ At least, this was the conception the Spanish clergy had of the sacrament, while the perception of the Indians was different, for confession implied some procedures, such as the personal analysis of one's past searching for sins, that were not part of their mentality. Another example was the introduction of the dichotomy between body and soul, which differed from the native perception. These turned out to be serious obstacles in encouraging Indians to confess after the initial acceptance of the sacrament. Of course, confessors did not attribute the

⁷ Rafael, *Contracting*, p. 151.

⁸ Lynn A. Blake, "Pastoral Power, Governmentality and Cultures of Order in Nineteenth-Century British Colombia", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 New Series (1999), pp. 79-93.

⁹ Rafael, *Contracting*, pp. 100-4; Blake, "Pastoral Power", pp. 80-81, 90. On the relation between confession and power, see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*, vol. 1 (London: Penguin Books, 1978), pp. 20-25, 61.

difficulty to the cultural distance between them and the Indians, rather they imputed it to native inferiority.¹⁰ Finally, a further obstacle was the difficulty of carrying out confessions in rural areas, so that the sacrament was not administered on a regular basis.

Despite these problems, the Spanish authorities saw confession as an essential tool in incorporating the natives into the Spanish culture since its required analysis of the past contributed to bringing various aspects of native culture into the Spanish system of knowledge. Making indigenous signs understandable was the first step towards a differentiation between those practices that could be incorporated into Christianity and those that had to be rejected. Aspects of native culture were therefore classified as falling “within and without the Law”. Hence a distinction was made between indigenous doctrines and customs on one side, and abuses and superstitions on the other, the latter being excluded as sins.¹¹

As can be seen, pastoral power was a strong element in official plans for subjecting Indians to the colonial rule. But evangelisation is not to be perceived as that hopeless experience that the natives went through to be transformed into orderly subjects. In fact, as Vicente L. Rafael suggests, due the inevitability of colonisation, the incorporation of the language and logic of conversion gave the Indians the possibility of defining their state of subordination, an essential element in any attempt to overcome subordination itself.¹² This is exactly what happened in those cases in which the natives adopted Christian concepts and practices as a cover for subtle forms of resistance to Spanish rule.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the Indians' perception of confession see Serge Gruzinski, “Individualization and Acculturation: Confession among the Nahuas of Mexico from the 16th to the 18th Century”, in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Asunción Lavrin (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 97-111. For a detailed analysis of Nahuas and Spaniards' different perceptions of moral and religious issues, see Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth. Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), *passim*.

¹¹ Rafael, *Contracting*, pp. 94, 107-9.

¹² Rafael, *Contracting*, p. 7.

Resistance

An important aim of the research is to analyse specific forms of indigenous and especially female indigenous resistance to colonial domination, and thus the thesis falls into the field of study that focuses on various forms of resistance. Before proceeding it is necessary to define what is meant by resistance. A useful definition has been provided by James Scott: "any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims made on that class by superordinate classes or to advance its own claims vis-à-vis those superordinate classes".¹³ Scott's research focuses on the contemporary class struggle, but it can be applied in this context by redefining the opposition peasants/owners in terms of Indians/Spaniards. Like Scott, the present research concentrates on those acts that can be considered as everyday resistance, excluding all those cases related to open violence and rebellion which have recently received considerable attention from scholars.¹⁴

This emphasis in studying resistance is understandable given the large number of indigenous rebellions in the eighteenth century, especially in central Mexico and Oaxaca. Most of these events were spontaneous outbursts by a community in reaction to threats coming from outside. The revolt was usually caused by economic factors, such as the collection of new or higher taxes or labour demands, or political ones, as in the case of conflict between a head town and its subordinate pueblos. Moreover, some uprisings had to do with the community's sense of autonomy and defence of a way of life, especially against parish priests' impositions. In any case, the goals were generally limited to the correction of specific abuses in a specific community, and the object of attack were local political or religious authorities. For that reason rebellions never led to regional insurrections, so that William Taylor has commented that

¹³ James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 290.

¹⁴ See: Susan Schroeder (ed.), *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska, 1998); Steve J. Stern, "New Approaches to the Study of Peasant Rebellion and Consciousness: Implications of the Andean Experience", in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World. 18th to 20th Centuries*, edited by Steve J. Stern (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 3-25; William B. Taylor, *Embriaguez*,

villagers were “good rebels but poor revolutionaries.”¹⁵ Rebellions were numerous throughout the colonial period, but violence was kept under control by systems of “quotidian arrangements” that tried to limit it, and for that reason the period has been known as the “pax colonial”. One way of looking at resistance is through the concept of a moral economy of colonial society: social relations were based on reciprocity; the authorities maintained the right to rule and collect tribute as long as the subsistence of their subjects was assured. Provided that the principle of reciprocity was respected, conflicts were regulated within the normal social structure, but if the authorities failed to act justly, the subjects had the right to revolt. The fact that rebellions became very common in the eighteenth century may be related to the decline of the principle of reciprocity due to the continuation of Spanish abuses and the introduction of new taxes.¹⁶

Rebellions have always been considered privileged moments of expression of Indian identity, eclipsing those acts that took place in the less visible domain of everyday life. Actually, rebellion can be seen as a short-term variant of a long process of reaction that indigenous communities adopted to counteract any change or threat to their reality. This long-term response is vividly defined by Steve Stern as “resistant adaptation”¹⁷, an expression that gives the idea of slow, ongoing changes in everyday life which reformulate the world in order to face a new challenge. Along the same lines, William Taylor defines this reaction as “passive resistance”¹⁸ which involved small acts of non-conformity with the rules set by colonial authorities. These acts were often performed using Spanish institutions (courts for example), demonstrating the adaptation to the new system and at the same time the re-conceptualisation of reality according to native needs. James Lockhart has gone further in analysing everyday

homicidio y rebelión en las pobalciones coloniales mexicanas (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987).

¹⁵ William B. Taylor, “Patterns and Variety in Mexican Village Uprisings”, in *The Indian in Latin American History. Resistance, Resilience, and Acculturation*, edited by John E. Kicza (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1993), p. 132. For the difference between “rebellion” and “insurrection” and the analysis of the causes of uprising see pp. 110-1, 123-7, 131-2.

¹⁶ Schroeder, *Native Resistance*, Introduction; Murdo J. Macleod, “Some Thoughts on the Pax Colonial, Colonial Violence, and Perceptions of Both”, in *Native Resistance*, pp. 139-42; Taylor, *Embriaguez*, pp. 233, 245-6. On moral economy, see Kevin Gosner, *Soldiers of the Virgin. The Moral Economy of a Colonial Maya Rebellion* (Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press, 1992), pp. 6-10, 108-10.

¹⁷ Stern, “New Approaches”, pp. 9-11.

¹⁸ Taylor, *Embriaguez*, p. 42.

resistance or the failure of Indians to adopt Spanish cultural elements, emphasising that in many cases it occurred beneath the level of consciousness and hardly corresponded to the ordinary notion of 'resistance'. Where an indigenous group's culture contained elements converging with the corresponding introduced elements, there was little resistance, but when and to the extent that the corresponding elements differed in basic respects, 'resistance' occurred.¹⁹

Having chosen everyday resistance as a window on cultural hegemony, it is necessary to define its attributes further. As Lockhart and Scott would agree, this kind of everyday resistance is characterised by little or no co-ordination and planning; it is normally carried out by individuals in response to their own needs, and is without a collective vision and organisation. However, individual action is not totally disconnected from the social context of its authors; rather it is based on informal networks that sustain it and on a strong subculture of resistance, as Scott claims, or on the normal cultural behaviour a group inherits, as Lockhart says. As a consequence, formal organisation is not necessary "and yet a form of coordination is achieved that alerts us that what is happening is not just individual action".²⁰ As such action is motivated by individual self-interest, it follows that everyday resistance pursues immediate goals, not long-run political objectives: people usually do not attempt to subvert the system through these forms, rather their aim is to survive. The absence of planning and of broad and lasting goals recalls some of the traits mentioned for rebellions. However, everyday resistance does not imply open violence and does not necessarily take place at a community level; rather it is carried out by individuals in their daily activities and relationships. Before leaving the issue of the nature of resistance it is necessary to mention two other aspects. First, resistance is not only a matter of behaviours and acts, but it is accomplished by thinking human beings. Thus the meaning that individuals give to their actions, or their intention, is a necessary background to the resistance itself,²¹ and also to the question of what action constitutes resistance. Moreover, if "such acts are rare and isolated, they are of little interest",²²

¹⁹ Lockhart, *Things*, pp. 304-32.

²⁰ Scott, *Weapons*, pp. 300-1, see also pp. 292-5; Lockhart, *Things*, pp. 304-32. See also Taylor, *Embriaguez*, pp. 43-44.

²¹ Stern, "New Approaches", p. 15.

²² Scott, *Weapons*, pp. 295-6.

they need to be repeated and spread so that they form a consistent pattern and become significant. Consistency is then the second key aspect that allows an act or behaviour to be classified as a significant element of resistance.

Having reached some definition of everyday resistance, it is necessary to narrow it down for the purposes of the present study. Scott lists various forms of resistance, such as dissimulation, desertion, sabotage, false compliance, and so on, and includes among them “cultural resistance”²³. He does not, however, fully develop the last concept in his analysis. Lockhart is primarily interested in cultural resistance, but discusses it at a general level.²⁴ It is cultural resistance within a specific context that is considered in the present research. The cases selected show what the Spanish called “Indians’ failure to comply”²⁵ from the point of view of traditions, social practices, beliefs and values. Indians were selective about what aspects of the new reality they incorporated in their culture. Spanish rule was theoretically strict in requiring conformity, but a close look at everyday native life shows how far older traditions survived beneath the facade of embracing new habits. What the indigenous people accomplished was a combination of selective adaptation and resistance.

To summarise, the research focuses on cultural resistance and the adaptation of native populations to colonial rule in New Spain, through the window of cases related to everyday life. In fact, as Susan Kellogg wrote, “these aspects [of everyday life] formed areas of semiautonomy for Indian societies that experienced Spanish rule and thus should prove especially instructive for assessing continuity and change”.²⁶ The microhistory approach has put emphasis on everyday life; two famous examples of this type of methodology in the European tradition are *Montaillou*, by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, and *The Cheese and the Worms*, by Carlo Ginzburg, which reconstruct the quotidian activities and behaviours of small communities or individuals. These studies show how it is possible, by reducing the scale of observation, to reveal broader

²³ Scott, *Weapons*, p. 34. On cultural resistance see as well Kicza, *Indian in Latin American History*, Introduction.

²⁴ Lockhart, *Things*, pp. 320-32.

²⁵ Schroeder, *Native Resistance*, Introduction.

²⁶ Kellogg, *Law*, Introduction and p. 213.

phenomena.²⁷ A similar approach has been used in early Latin American history too, and specifically in the field of ethnohistory, to which the present study belongs. S. L. Cline's *Colonial Culhuacan* concentrates on a set of specific individuals from a single central Mexican settlement or *altepetl*, using a corpus of Nahuatl testaments issued within a few years of each other in the late sixteenth century. Studies by Robert Haskett, Rebecca Horn, and James Lockhart range over longer periods of time and/or larger areas but use much the same method.²⁸ The scope of the present research goes beyond an analysis of patterns of everyday life in Indian communities, since the focus is on examining the degree to which everyday life conformed to Church policy and on seeing to what extent it represents resistance and assimilation.

Rural Areas

The research looks at cultural resistance from the perspective of rural areas. Being relatively distant from the centres of major Spanish population, the inhabitants of rural settlements might be expected to preserve traditional values and habits to a larger extent than those in the urban areas. As a consequence, they represent a suitable case study to analyse the cultural resistance of the Nahuas and the degree of penetration of Spanish values. In the present research, the focus will be on the settlements of the Valley of Toluca, immediately west of the Basin of Mexico.

Throughout the colonial period, the indigenous countryside underwent many changes. The first large disruption came at a very early stage with the introduction of Old World diseases by the conquerors. Despite the fact that in rural areas contact between Indians and Spaniards was limited, diseases provoked a demographic disaster that dramatically modified the composition of indigenous society. Moreover, the invasion

²⁷ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou. Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324* (London: Penguin Books, 1978). Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980). The fields of microhistory and of "history from below" (or history of the common people, not the elite) are strictly linked and have proved very useful in terms of shaping the research towards an account of everyday life and traditions in rural areas. For a theorisation of these fields the following references have been used: Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory", and Jim Sharpe, "History from Below", in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, edited by Peter Burke (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp. 97-119 and 25-42 respectively; and Eric Hobsbawm, *Sobre la Historia* (Barcelona: Critica, Grijalbo Mondadori, 1998).

²⁸ Details on these works in nn. 1 and 3 above.

of European livestock affected the use of lands for native agriculture and damaged their crops. The economy of rural areas near the core of the Spanish occupation experienced further changes through the introduction of the *encomienda*, shortly after the conquest, and the *repartimiento*, from mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth century. These systems of exacting labour and tribute strongly affected the indigenous communities, in some cases taking people away from their homes or forcing them to produce new staples. Most Spanish immigrants settled in the large cities, but despite royal legislation from the beginning appreciable numbers spilled out into the countryside and came in direct contact with the rural population. The new social and economic structures were not the only cause of changes in community life, but also the efforts of the Catholic Church to instruct and convert the natives. The Church became an institutional presence in every indigenous settlement of any size, and Christian churches became the very symbol of the communities. Moreover, the introduction of the Christian nuclear family and the model of the role women were to play brought about slow but definite alterations in the structure of native families and in the relations between their members.²⁹

Changes in the traditional rural communities went on during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the growth of a Hispanic civil population in the countryside, the expansion of the hacienda, and the continuing efforts of the Church. Hispanisation proceeded apace. Despite all this, clear signs of native structures and culture remained, as with the concept of the Indian pueblo or *altepetl*, or the continuity of many native practices, ceremonies and beliefs in social, economic, and religious life. The natives appropriated and adopted those aspects of the European culture that they could apply in their daily life. By doing that, they acknowledged the existence of colonial rule and institutions, but at the same time other aspects of their culture were resistant to change.³⁰

²⁹ For a general overview of the indigenous countryside in colonial time, see Cheryl English Martin, "Indigenous Peoples", in *The Countryside in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), pp. 188-96.

³⁰ Martin, "Indigenous Peoples", pp. 207-12.

It has been mentioned in the previous section how indigenous communities practised a form of “resistant adaptation”. This kind of resistance is more likely to be observed in the colonial countryside, where changes in everyday life were slow, and there were fewer Spaniards. In urban areas the impact of Spanish culture was swifter, and could be more abrupt and disruptive, so that assimilation of Spanish habits was quicker. For instance, it can be said that the subordination of women to men in terms of legal status became visible in Mexico City from the beginning of the seventeenth century through the fact that lawsuits before the Real Hacienda were presented by men on behalf of their women. On the contrary, in the countryside female power of initiative in the same period was stronger. It has to be acknowledged that during the eighteenth century rebellion appeared many times as another viable way of resistance, at least according to the considerable number of uprisings in rural areas.³¹ The growth of indigenous population put pressure on community lands and this, together with the parallel increase of pressure from the Spaniards, provoked tension among communities and with state officials. Therefore, the countryside became the stage of various forms of reaction, but in the end open resistance seemed to be a less effective form of resistance due to Spanish repression through physical punishment, exile, or penal servitude. Rebellions were crushed while quotidian activities and behaviours went on in the long run. As a consequence, it can be said that the success of a form of resistance depends partly on the kind of repression the authority may effectively exert.³¹

One warning needs to be made about how to approach rural areas and their patterns of reaction. According to a common prejudice, peasant consciousness is simple and predictable, and only linked to basic needs. On the contrary, Steve Stern shows how it is rather problematic and intricate, and it relies on the “culture history” of the area of reference, making the analysis more complex.³² Moreover, peasants’ physical mobility and contact with various ethnic groups proves to have been greater than expected, in fact the migration of labourers and the hacienda system favoured interchange within

³¹ Scott, *Weapons*, pp. 34, 246, Stern, “New Approaches”, p. 6; Ward Stavig, “Conflict, Violence, and Resistance”, in *The Countryside in Colonial Latin America*, pp. 227-32. On the Spanish system of repression, see Taylor, “Patterns”, pp. 116-7.

³² Stern, “New Approaches”, p. 15.

communities and communication among racial groups.³³ The classic perception of the countryside as static has to be reconsidered. Furthermore, peasant political culture was not univocal but naturally involved contradictions. In fact, rural political behaviour varied from following democratic values within the community and subordinating individual interest to collective needs, to affirming obedience to constituted authority and differentiating according to lineage or economic or political status. This makes the analysis of resistance in rural areas a complex matter. Some insight may come from the fact that peasants tended to extend and adapt the familial experience of authority to community settings; as a consequence the analysis of familial relationships may be a key to a better understanding of the community level. The dominant position of men in familial life tended to extend to the public level as well, where it was even more marked. As a consequence, political resistance may be perceived as a male domain, but a close analysis of the patterns of resistance in rural areas reveals that a key role was played by native women.³⁴ Therefore, the focus on rural areas interacts with the second perspective of the research, the role of native women.

Women

Besides the focus on rural areas, the research adopts the perspective of the role native women played in the process of resistance to and assimilation of the colonial power. Women by nature are the prime transmitters of culture as mothers. Through continuous contact with their children they pass on to them their first knowledge of the world, so that they strongly influence their children's perceptions of the ways in which the society is organised and structured. Their essential role as "cultural mediators"³⁵ in this context justifies giving attention to them in cultural resistance. Moreover, it is presumed that in rural areas native women normally had less contact with Spaniards than men. It is true that women carried out some activities that implied mobility and exposure to the outside world, such as maguey cultivation or pulque distribution.

³³ Louisa Schell Hoberman, "Interpretations of the Colonial Countryside", in *The Countryside in Colonial Latin America*, pp. 245-8.

³⁴ Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender. Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 194-7, 302-3.

³⁵ The definition of women as cultural mediators is in Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators", *Ethnohistory* 39 (1992), p. 97.

However, men worked as labourers on the Spanish estates, and they dealt with Spanish officials as representatives of the municipality. As a consequence, while men were more exposed to contact with Spanish culture, indigenous women were more likely to remain within the realm of family and community relations. They were not closed off from cultural innovation altogether, but the different degree of exposure to the new culture may help to explain why they assimilated some Spanish habits to a smaller extent. In this sense, native rural women represent an illuminating perspective through which cultural resistance may be analysed. Nevertheless, their world has been little studied, partly because of the difficulty of finding relevant sources, and partly because of stereotypes that have depicted them as passive beings.³⁶

The various forms of resistance and accommodation that native women adopted during colonial times can be analysed starting from the pre-colonial period. Some scholars have pointed to a kind of gender parallelism in preconquest Mexico and Peru.³⁷ To an extent, society was organised through parallel structures and cultural roles for women and men, each one having her/his important functions, the woman inside the household and the man at a more public level. Men had important functions in the public domain as well as being heads of the family. But on the other hand, women had socially important roles as priestesses and teachers for girls, or in the organisation of marketplaces, and their household activities were acknowledged as fundamental to the preservation of the order of the cosmos. As a consequence, it can be said that even if native societies were not equal in terms of gender, they were based on complementary roles of women and men, which together assured the proper functioning of society.³⁸ Since direct evidence for preconquest social reality does not exist, such interpretations remain quite speculative, but the notion of gender parallelism and complementarity indeed pervades the studies relating to that period.

³⁶ Wood, "Matters of Life", pp. 166-7, 175, 181.

³⁷ Kellogg, *Law*; Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches. Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

³⁸ Kellogg, *Law*, pp. 88-96; Susan Kellogg, "The Woman's Room: Some Aspects of Gender Relations in Tenochtitlan in the Late Pre-Hispanic Period", *Ethnohistory* 42(4) (1995), pp. 563-76. See also June Nash, "Aztec Women: The Transition from Status to Class in Empire and Colony", in *Women and Colonization. Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), pp. 134-48.

Starting from the 1970s, with the explosion of interest in women's history many studies have maintained that a different model of gender relations prevailed during colonial times.³⁹ In the view of Susan Kellogg, for example, at the beginning of the colonial period indigenous women still enjoyed a good position. The decline in the population, the absence of men from the communities due to labour drafts, and the scarcity of European women placed native women in the position to become owners of land and companions of the conquerors. In Kellogg's view, this advantageous status had declined dramatically by the end of the sixteenth century because of the predominance of the Spanish model of gender relationships. This model was rooted in a system of laws dating back to medieval times, as well as in a strong Catholic ideology that stressed the importance of female purity and honour. Women were seen as weak and lacking self-control, so that they needed men's guidance and protection. This conception is clearly expressed in the conflict between passion and reason, the former considered as female and the latter as typically male.⁴⁰ To preserve women from sin and temptation, they were put under male supervision and their freedom to perform activities outside the household was strongly reduced. The introduction of this model in New Spain tended to make native women's status more and more dependent on men. Recent works from Deborah Kanter and Juan Javier Pescador have underlined how native women's hardship continued in the late colonial period.⁴¹ By the second half of the eighteenth century, in fact, native female land ownership is said to have suffered a significant decline due to the increase of population and consequently of competition for land. Compared to native men, women and especially widows were an easier target for dispossession since they were less involved in pueblo politics and connections. The difficulties rural women had to face may help to explain why many of them migrated to Mexico City in the late period. They ended up working in

³⁹ See as an example Etienne and Leacock (ed.), *Women and Colonization*. In the book, women's dependence on men during the colonial time is stressed, while rejecting the "passive victim" approach, but the recent studies of the 1990s show a more complex and multifaceted approach.

⁴⁰ Silvia Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City 1790-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 55; Kellogg, *Law*, pp. 105-6, 114-5; Asunción Lavrin, "Women in Spanish American Colonial Society", in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. II, edited by Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 327; Laura A. Lewis, "The 'Weakness' of Women and the Feminization of the Indian in Colonial Mexico", *Colonial Latin American Review* 5 (June 1996), p. 77.

⁴¹ Deborah Kanter, "Native Female Land Tenure and Its Decline in Mexico 1750-1900", and Juan Javier Pescador, "Vanishing Woman: Female Migration and Ethnic Identity in Late-Colonial Mexico City", *Ethnohistory, Special Issue: Women, Power, and Resistance in Colonial Mesoamerica* 42(4) (1995), edited by Kevin Gosner and Deborah Kanter, pp. 607-16 and 617-26 respectively.

domestic service, food preparation, sewing and spinning, wet-nursing or in the cigar factory but their conditions of life are thought not to have improved because of hard work and very low wages. Moreover, it seems that in the city native women underwent a sort of “proletarianization”, at least for Spanish authorities since they lost their racial designation and were described simply as poor.

Despite the reduction of status and autonomy, contemporary studies are showing how the stereotype of rural native women simply as objects of violence and victims of a patriarchal culture is no longer applicable. The notion of female complicity in accepting patriarchal dominion is too simple and uncontroversial; according to Stern, reality presents instead a dialectic of assent and resistance that makes the change of female status over colonial time a much more complex process. ‘Women did not directly challenge the principles of male dominance and female subordination, but they contested their effects in their everyday manifestations and practices. This strategy allowed them to open up spaces for more autonomous female action in a gradual way.’⁴² It is a strategy totally consistent with the characteristics of everyday resistance.

Moreover the analysis of the female role and status cannot be considered in isolation from the social context. As Irene Silverblatt⁴³ reminds us, gender needs to be related to class and race to draw a more complete picture of women’s conditions of life. The combination of gender and class in the native society determined different situations. For example, it is commonly believed that indigenous women could exploit contact with conquerors through marriage and improve their position in the colonial society. This may be true for elite women, but the commoners were undoubtedly less useful to the Spanish in terms of matrimonial alliances, and they usually remained more isolated especially in the countryside, or else suffered repression through work and tribute. Race was another issue for the Spanish who saw the categories of ‘native’ and ‘female’ as similar in many respects. Both Indians and women were associated with weakness, predisposition to sin, and lack of self-control, so that native women were

⁴² Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 9-10, 97, 299-302.

⁴³ Irene Silverblatt, “Lessons of Gender and Ethnohistory in Mesoamerica”, *Ethnohistory, Special Issue* 42(4) (1995), pp. 639-50.

the utmost expression of fragility and of the need of guidance. Hence according to Spanish perception 'native' and 'female' were expression of an "otherness" that needed to be controlled.⁴⁴ The combination of gender, class and race shows how women's role and status is a multifaceted issue.

As we have seen, literature on Spanish American women in the colonial period has shed light on several aspects of women's life that have been too long considered simple and uncontroversial. But much research still needs to be done on female reactions to colonial rule, particularly in rural areas. Scholars of peasant rebellions in colonial Mexico (especially William B. Taylor) have shown how native women had a very important and active role. Most of the time, women appeared to be more numerous than men, and in a quarter of the cases they led the attack against the authorities, showing a high level of aggression and the use of insults. Various hypotheses have been developed to explain their leading role. It is argued by some that men were often away or worked far from the community, or that women extended to the public domain those practices and sensibilities developed in their familial contexts of struggle, which made them more reactive.⁴⁵ Yet their involvement in exceptional events did not lead to any more long-term effect on the gendered perception of the political realm as a male domain.

It is in everyday situations that female resistance displayed a more subtle and interesting range of weapons. At one end of a continuum are acts that may not be visible in the documents, such as showing indifference in the proper fulfilment of housework, or staying out of the house longer than a husband would normally expect. These deviations from normal behaviour during the accomplishment of an everyday routine are difficult to detect in the historical sources, but it is important to acknowledge their possible existence. A more evident weapon was the pluralization of the number of male allies who could help women to defend their cases. For example, a woman could mobilise her father to protect her against her abusive husband, or even call upon the all-male cabildo or town council. Another strategy was the creation of a

⁴⁴ On the combination of gender and race, and the concept of "otherness", see Lewis, "The 'Weakness' of Women", pp. 73-94.

⁴⁵ Taylor, *Embriaguez*, p. 176; Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 204-6.

network of female relations that allowed sharing experiences and provided solidarity and help. Within this network, women could increase the power of their reaction by using gossip, for example affecting someone's reputation, or scandal, making public some information in a provocative way. Both techniques implied the awareness of the power of words and an ability to select the moment and the context in which to use it. It was a cultural skill in which women proved to be very effective.⁴⁶

An extreme weapon was the use of magic, pervasive in native societies.⁴⁷ In fact, witchcraft was a concept Spaniards inherited from the European experience of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which included witch-hunting that spread in northern Europe. But Spain was different, for it had true heretics to deal with, so witchcraft was a secondary issue that never reached the dramatic stage of the witch-hunt. It was normally explained as ignorance rather than heresy, and Christian instruction was the common remedy. It was related to the perception of women as weak, subject to temptation, and thus more likely to fall under the Devil's influence, especially when they were poor, old and widows, that is the weakest in the social order. However, since magical practices were generally thought of as coming from the Devil, witchcraft was perceived as a threat to the order created by God, and consequently women were potentially a dangerous instrument of the Devil that needed to be controlled.⁴⁸ When this perception of witchcraft was brought to the Spanish colonies, it was quickly associated with the indigenous world as a world of idolatry and weakness. The process followed the general demonisation of the Indian so common during the colonisation, but what is interesting is the role native women

⁴⁶ On female weapons see the classification presented in Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 98-111, 142-7. He considers female weapons within the gender struggle, but the classification can be usefully applied to the broader context of cultural resistance to the colonial rule. On women's networks of solidarity see also Elinor C. Burkett, "Indian Women and White Society: the Case of 16th Century Peru", in *Latin American Women. Historical Perspectives*, edited by Asunción Lavrin (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 119-122.

⁴⁷ For a general approach to witchcraft in the New World the following studies have been used: Silverblatt, *Moon*, pp. 160-96; Ruth Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism, and Women's Powers: Views from the Mexican Inquisition", in *Sexuality and Marriage*, pp. 182-4, 192; Susan Migden Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 155-8. Steve Stern generally refers to the use of magic as a female weapon: Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 108-10.

⁴⁸ On the perception of the Devil in the New World, see Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), *passim*, and also *The Idea of the Devil*

played within it. Irene Silverblatt states that, while accusing indigenous women of witchcraft and trying to limit their actions, the Spanish authorities gave them a weapon of resistance. In her view, witches were women who practised ancient traditions and worshipped native deities: accusing them was an implicit affirmation of their role in the native communities as defenders of indigenous identity.⁴⁹ According to Ruth Behar, women used witchcraft also to reverse the usual order at a more private level, the one of relationships with men. Bewitchment and remedies were in fact applied to husbands or lovers to gain some power over them and overturn female subordination.⁵⁰ Thus witchcraft can be interpreted as an act of reaction against the new Christian Spanish values and model of female subordination, an act of cultural resistance and challenge to the colonial and male authorities.

The idea of sexual witchcraft is particularly interesting. Due to the kind of witchcraft already present in Spain, the idea of witches' sabbath so popular in Europe was not exported to the colonies.⁵¹ Native women were mostly accused of using their power to heal, or induce illness, and to practice love magic to seduce a man, recover a lover's attention, or control a violent husband. Through sexual witchcraft then, women could reverse normal male-female relations, exerting their power over men. It was a threat to the social order, a reason for the authority's intervention against it. Moreover, the use of magic favoured the creation of networks among women to exchange remedies and information. They were usually interethnic and interclass networks in the sense that Indian and black women were considered the specialists in magic while Spanish and mestizo women sought their advice. The most common instrument of witchcraft practices was the alteration of food. The range of ingredients women added to meals varied from herbs and other elements of the nature, to menstrual blood, asserting female power over the domestic realm.⁵²

and the Problem of the Indian: the Case of Mexico in the 16th Century (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1991), *passim*.

⁴⁹ Silverblatt, *Moon*, p. 195.

⁵⁰ Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft", pp. 179-80, 194-8.

⁵¹ Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft", pp. 182-4.

⁵² Socolow, *Women*, p. 158.

These female weapons that have been identified are essentially rooted in women's everyday life and practices. In Stern's view, women used their quotidian activities and relationships to affect both their gendered position and Spanish dominance, and this double-fronted struggle is the expression of their "deviance".⁵³ The dissertation will ponder the extent to which the weapons and tendencies identified in this subsection are found among Nahua women of eighteenth-century Toluca, as well as considering those aspects that are specific to the area of study.

The Area of Study

Geographical Setting and Economic Activities

The Valley of Toluca, lying west of Mexico City, is an important rural highland area which ranges from 1,700 to 4,560 m (the mountain Nevado de Toluca), with most of the settlements at 2,400 to 3,000 m (see Figure 1). The cold climate helps make the Valley particularly suitable for maize cultivation and livestock raising, which have been its major resources since colonial times; even before that, not long before the Spanish arrived, the Nahuas were attracted into the area by its excellent maize lands.⁵⁴

From the sixteenth century much of the Valley, also known as the Valley of Matalcingo, was part of the Marquesado del Valle, the *señorío* originally given to Hernando Cortés, and it fell mostly into three judicial and administrative jurisdictions: Toluca, Metepec and Tenango del Valle. Two other areas that were economically related to the Valley were Lerma and Temascaltepec-Zultepec (the mining centres to

⁵³ On the conception of women's conformity and deviance, see Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 17-19; and Silverblatt, *Moon*, p. 213.

⁵⁴ Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 174, 270, 330; James Lockhart, "Capital and Province, Spaniard and Indian: The Example of Late Sixteenth-Century Toluca", in *Provinces of Early Mexico*, edited by Ida Altman and James Lockhart (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1976), p. 103. See also Agustín de Vetancurt, *Teatro mexicano*; vol. 3, *Crónica de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio*, (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas Editor, 1960), pp. 166-7.

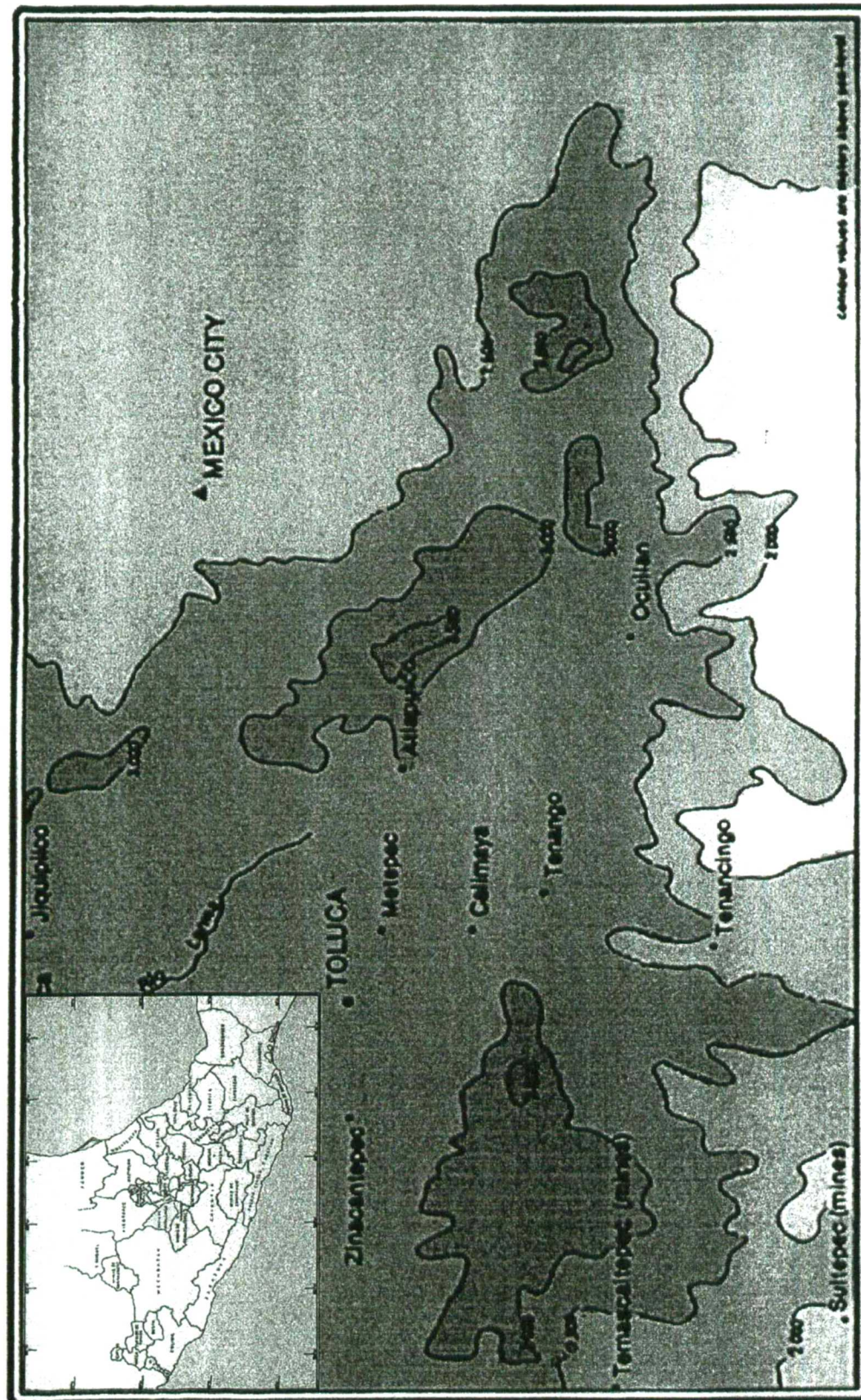


Figure 1: Map of the Valley of Toluca

the south), of which some evidence will be drawn in the present study, but the research focuses especially on the three aforementioned jurisdictions.⁵⁵

As far as economic activities are concerned, with the introduction of the Spanish *encomienda* in the sixteenth century, goods and to some extent labour were diverted to Mexico City, where the *encomenderos* were based. The landowners who settled in the Valley were Spaniards of a more modest level, forming the first nucleus of Spanish population. Both large estates and more modest enterprises were dedicated to agricultural activities, including pig farming, sheep raising and herding, and they produced goods for the markets of the capital.⁵⁶ A fundamental commercial link between the Valley and Mexico City was thus established at an early time, creating a sort of dependency of the former on the latter; this link has been so powerful that it is still evident today. Thus, the Toluca Valley specialised in agriculture and livestock raising that served the urban market of the capital of New Spain, as well as internal consumption.

The situation in the eighteenth century was still very similar, as can be illustrated by a report written in 1757 by Cayetano Jacinto de Sotomayor, priest of Metepec, complying with the archbishop's request for information on haciendas and ranchos in rural areas.⁵⁷ The archbishop's primary purpose was to better organise the collection of tithes, but the report is also valuable in providing information on agricultural activities in the Valley. Sotomayor visited ten haciendas, describing their holdings and production. In all cases, the only crops grown were maize and beans, while almost all had livestock, especially cows, mares and sheep, and sometimes also pigs. Only in one case was the major crop wheat. In addition, Sotomayor also interviewed the

⁵⁵ Gerhard, *Guide*, pp. 168-9, 174-8, 267-73, 330-1. On the Marquesado del Valle, see Bernardo García Martínez, *El Marquesado del Valle* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1969), pp. 73-90, and Borah, *Justice by Insurance*, pp. 330-51.

⁵⁶ Lockhart, "Capital and Province", pp. 103-9. On the economic link between the Toluca Valley and Mexico City, see also Ross Hassig, *Trade, Tribute, and Transportation. The Sixteenth-Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), pp. 247-8, 255-8; and Hanns J. Prem, "Spanish Colonization and the Indian Property in Central Mexico, 1521-1620", *The Americas before and after 1492: Current Geographical Research. Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82(3) (September 1992), pp. 451-5.

⁵⁷ Archivo General de la Nación (from here on AGN) BN 1757, vol. 982, exp. 19, "Mapa de las haciendas, ranchos y comunidades de la doctrina de Metepec, formada por edicto del Arzobispo de México", ff. 1-11.

indigenous authorities of Metepec, San Bartolomé Tlatelolco, San Gerónimo, San Mateo Atenco and San Gaspar concerning community lands. The Indians reported unanimously that the crop they cultivated was maize; according to them, the harvest was very bad most of the time because of their reliance on the impoverished members of each community for seed. Thus the inhabitants of the Valley still preserved the basic indigenous crop as its dominant staple, as happened in central Mexico in general, while a relatively small number of Indians possessed livestock. The maize produced was destined for the major indigenous market in Mexico City and in a minor way for the mining centres south of the Valley (Temazcaltepec and Zultepec).⁵⁸

Population of the Valley: Between Indians and Spaniards

In the fifteenth century the Valley of Toluca was inhabited by various groups speaking Otomanguean languages; late in that century the Nahuas arrived in strength, taking over and making Nahuatl the dominant language used. Although Spaniards penetrated substantially into the Valley after the conquest, numerous settlements preserved a mainly indigenous population.⁵⁹

In the archival sources explored, some scattered information has been found on the settlements in the eighteenth century. A document issued by Josef Fernández Ríofrío under the request of the archbishopric of Mexico and dated 1733 lists 36 pueblos and barrios of the Valley of Toluca, province of Metepec and Lerma. In the documentation that has been consulted the term 'pueblo' was generally used for an independent settlement, while 'barrio' referred to a smaller settlement usually dependent on a pueblo or included in its jurisdiction; however, the meaning is often ambiguous, so that no precise interpretation of the categories can be given. The document of 1733 also reports that the town of Toluca was composed of twelve dependent barrios, plus a total of sixteen settlements, between pueblos and barrios, under its jurisdiction.

⁵⁸ Lockhart, "Capital and Province", p. 105.

⁵⁹ Gerhard, *Guide*, pp. 174-5, 270, 330-1; Lockhart, "Capital and Province", pp. 103, 115, 121; Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 202-3; María Teresa Jarquín O., *Formación y desarrollo de un pueblo novohispano: Metepec en el Valle de Toluca* (Mexico: El Colegio Mexiquense, 1990), p. 149. Useful insights on the settlements and population of the Toluca Valley are found in Stephanie Wood,

Finally, it is noted that the whole Valley of Toluca had 42 haciendas and 23 ranchos.⁶⁰ Another document, from 1739, mentions that the parish of Toluca included fourteen pueblos and fourteen barrios, twenty haciendas and thirteen ranchos.⁶¹ The information provided by these documents is somewhat fragmentary, but a printed source of the period gives a more comprehensive view. In 1742 José Antonio Villaseñor y Sánchez was commissioned by the viceroy of New Spain to draw up a report on the settlements and populations of the viceroyalty. The account was completed by 1746, and it stated that the province of Metepec was one of the biggest of New Spain in territory and population. The centre was San Juan (Bautista) Metepec, which despite being small in itself, had under its jurisdiction 36 main pueblos and almost 300 small settlements. Then there was San José de Toluca, with nineteen dependent pueblos, and finally Tenango del Valle, with three main pueblos.⁶²

"Corporate Adjustments in Colonial Mexican Towns: Toluca Region, 1550-1810" (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 1984), *passim*.

⁶⁰ Archivo Histórico Arzobispado de México (from here on AHAM), Box 1733, "Diversos papeles e instrumentos. Mapa de las colecciones de indios de Ixtlahuaca y Toluca", ff. 1-5. The pueblos were: Almoloya, Zinacantepec, Amanalco, Metepec, Tlacotepec, Mexicatzingo, Calimaya, Tepemaxalco, San Antonio la Ysla, San Lucas, Asumpción, Xuajutengo, Capuluac, Tianguistengo, Almoloya el Chico, Tescaliacaque, Xalatlaco, Chilapa, Ocuyoacaque, Capanoyan, Tepeloyuca, Atlapulco, Huixilapa, Temoaya, San Bartolomé, Moscoquilpan, Tentla, Xilosingo, Xomacatlan, Ozolotepec, Mimiapa, Tarasquillo, Lerma, Tultepec, Atengo, Chapultepec. The barrios of Toluca were: Santiago Mexitepec, Clacopa, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, San Nicolas Huichila, San Juan Bautista, San Sebastian, San Miguel, San Bernardino, San Luis, San Juan Chiquito, Santiago Guachumulco, Santa Cruz. Lastly, the pueblos listed under Toluca were: Calixtlahuaca, San Antonio, San Lorenzo, San Cristobal, San Andrés, San Mateo Zacatipan, Tecaxique and San Martinito, Cacalomacan, Totocuitlapilco el Bravo, San Geronimo, Santa Anna, San Pedro Totoltepec, Concepcion; and the barrios: San Marcos, San Mateo Oxtotitlan, San Buenaventura. The pueblo of San Pablo is listed apart.

⁶¹ AHAM, Box 1739, "Inventario de la parroquia de esta ciudad, sus pueblos, barrios, lexanías", ff. 1, 5. These are the pueblos and barrios listed in the document. The dependent pueblos were: San Pedro, San Mateo, San Lorenzo, Santa Anna, on the east; San Antonio, Cacalomacan, San Buenaventura, on the west; San Pablo, San Andrés, San Cristobal, on the north; and Tlacotepec, Capultitlan, San Mateo Ostotitlan on the south. As for the barrios: at the east, San Juan Bautista, San Sebastian, Santa Clara, San Diego, Huitzila, Tlacopam; at the west, San Bernardino; at the north, Santa Barbara, San Miguel, San Marcos, Santiago Tlaxumulco, Santiago Mietepec, Santa Cruz; at the south there were no barrios.

⁶² José Antonio de Villaseñor y Sánchez, *Theatro americano: descripción general de los reinos y provincias de la Nueva España y sus jurisdicciones* (Mexico City: Trillas, 1992), pp. 191-2, 196-200. Pueblos of Metepec: San Miguel Temazcalzingo, San Pedro Tultepec, San Francisco Chichicoautla, San Francisco Xonacatlán, San Juan Xiquipilco, Santiago Temoaya, San Lorenzo Huitzizilapa, San Gerónimo Amanalco, San Pedro Atlapulco, Ixtlahuaca, San Felipe, Asunción Malacatepec, San Miguel Almoloya del Río, San Miguel Zinacantepec, San Mateo Texcalicaque, Tepemaxalco, Calimaya, San Mateo Mexicalzingo, San Miguel Chapultepec, San Antonio de Padua, San Miguel Mimialpa, Asunción Xalatlaco, San Mateo Tlachichilpa, Santiago Tlacotepec, Santa María Atlamulco, San Mateo Atengo, San Gaspar, Santiago Tianguistengo, Santa Ana Xilotzingo, San Bartolomé Otzolotepec, Xocotitlán, San Bartolomé Capuluac, Asunción Tepexoyuca, San Martín Ocuyoacaque, San Juan Guapanoya. Pueblos of Toluca: Santa Anna, San Juan, San Gerónimo, San Pedro, San Mateo, San Lorenzo, at the west; San Miguel, San Bartolomé, Capultitlán, at the south; Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Pablo, San Cristóbal, San Andrés, at the north; Tecaxic, San

As far as the composition of the population is concerned, the *padrones* (detailed censuses) of some settlements that have been found in the archives for the first half of the eighteenth century are summarised in Table 1.⁶³ Systematic data for the whole area have not been located, so the information collected is scattered and fragmentary, but it can still provide some insights on the population distribution and composition. In the three main centres of the jurisdictions, Toluca, Metepec and Tenango del Valle, the Spanish presence around 1717 was quite substantial, especially in Toluca proper. Nevertheless, Indians predominated numerically, and in the pueblos away from these centres the indigenous prevalence was even more striking. The same pattern is evident in other pueblos of the Valley, and in Temazcaltepec and Zultepec, in the mining region. Thus, through the whole region Spaniards were an established presence at least in the *cabeceras*, but even here there was an indigenous majority that assured the predominance of native languages and culture.

Some *padrones* have been found also for a later period, beyond the temporal scope of the present research, and a glimpse at them shows the continuity of the pattern. The data for San Gerónimo Amanalco (Metepec) in 1767-68 indicate that there were nine Spanish and 77 indigenous families in the *cabecera*, while in the surrounding pueblos there were sixteen Spanish against 854 indigenous families.⁶⁴ In 1776 in Xiquipilco (Metepec) there were 487 Spaniards and 1805 Indians.⁶⁵ Finally, in 1777 San Bartolomé Otzolotepec (Metepec) was inhabited by 1134 Spaniards and 4348 Indians.⁶⁶ The concentration of the Spanish inhabitants in major centres is evident also

Buenaventura, San Antonio, Ostotitlán, Cacamolotlán (he says poniente, it is at the east). Pueblos of Tenango del Valle: Atlatlauca, Xuchiapa, and three small villages San Pedro Zitepec, San Gabriel Zepayutla and San Martín Coapatengo all together. Some information on pueblos can be found also in Javier, Romero Quiroz, *La ciudad de Toluca. Su historia*, vol. 2 (Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de México, 1973), pp. 135-43.

⁶³ The data were drawn from the report of the inspection that the archbishop Lanciego y Eguilaz did in the Toluca Valley in 1717: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L 10A/4, 1717. Similar data are reported by Vetancurt for 1696, for the centres of Toluca, Calimaya, Metepec and Zinacantepec; see Vetancurt, *Teatro mexicano*, pp. 166-7, 193, 197-8, 214-5.

⁶⁴ These data are drawn from: AHAM, Box 1767-68, "Padrón y matrícula de todos los naturales así indios, españoles, como de razón que estan obligados al precepto anual de confesar y comulgar en este partido de San Gerónimo Amanalco ayuda de parroquia de San Miguel Zinacantepec; Secretaría arzobispal de Antonio de Lorenzana. Fondo Episcopal".

⁶⁵ AGNBN 1776, vol. 1206, exp. 11, "Padrón del pueblo de San Juan Xiquipilco".

⁶⁶ AHAM, *Padrones*, L 9D/41, 1771, "Padrón de San Bartolomé Otzolotepec".

Table 1. The populations of some settlements of the Valley of Toluca, 1717

Settlement		Spaniards (and 'gente de razón')	Indians	Total Inhabitants
Toluca	<i>cabecera</i>	3482	7978	
	<i>pueblos</i>	2992	1173	15625
Metepec	<i>cabecera</i>	474	1624	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	1376	3474
Tenango del Valle	<i>cabecera</i>	736	892	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	1922	3550
Calimaya	<i>cabecera</i>	964	4955	5919 (**)
	<i>pueblos</i>	(*)	(*)	
Zinacantepec	<i>cabecera</i>	504	759	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	2156	3419
Xalatlaco	<i>cabecera</i>	352	839	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	1354	2545
S.Bartolomé Capolohuac	<i>cabecera</i>	258	932	1190 (**)
	<i>pueblos</i>	(*)	(*)	
Tecaxic	<i>cabecera</i>	168	139	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	327	634
San Mateo Atenco	<i>cabecera</i>	<20	2033	2050 (**)
	<i>pueblos</i>	(*)	(*)	
San Mateo Texcaliacac	<i>cabecera</i>	—	542	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	1108	1650
Temazcaltepec	<i>cabecera</i>	986	467	
	<i>pueblos</i>	—	2308	3761
Zultepec	<i>cabecera</i>	2161	(*)	
	<i>pueblos</i>	(*)	4875	7036 (**)

(*) no data on pueblos

(**) incomplete or approximate data

These data are drawn from the report of the tour of inspection made by archbishop Lanciego y Eguilaz: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L 10A/4, 1717.

in the case of Tenango del Valle in 1770 studied by Deborah Kanter.⁶⁷

To conclude, throughout the Valley Indians represented the majority of the population in pueblos and small settlements outside the *cabeceras* proper. In *cabeceras* Spaniards were more numerous, in addition to which there were many Spaniards travelling between the Toluca area and Mexico City. The same pattern was evident with mestizos and mulattoes, who were normally included in the Spanish population under the name 'gente de razón'. The fact that these groups were considered together with the Spanish population helps to explain the relative absence of references to mestizos in the documents, which may seem surprising due to the general expansion of the mestizo population in the eighteenth century.⁶⁸ Hence, the overall situation in the Valley of Toluca allowed indigenous settlements to remain intact, retaining their language and a core of their culture, while at the same time being exposed to a substantial Spanish influence.

The Structure of Spanish Political and Religious Authority

As previously mentioned, much of the Valley of Toluca was originally included in the royal grant of the Marquesado del Valle, whose heirs were long permitted to appoint justices in the Valley, normally a prerogative of the Crown. But after a reorganisation of the political system in 1678 the King reserved to himself the right to appoint all magistrates, so that by the eighteenth century the Marquesado was no longer relevant to the administration of justice, and will not be considered in the present study.⁶⁹

At a local level, outside the Spanish cities the Crown was represented by officials with the title of corregidor or alcalde mayor who were in charge of large rural districts; they were primarily magistrates but also collected taxes and had other administrative duties.

⁶⁷ Deborah Kanter, "Viudas y vecinos, milpas y magueyes. El impacto del auge de la población en el Valle de Toluca: el caso de Tenango del Valle en el siglo XVIII", *Estudios demográficos y urbanos* 7(1) (1992), pp. 22-25.

⁶⁸ On this matter see Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 229-30.

⁶⁹ Romero Quiroz, *La ciudad de Toluca*, vol. 1, pp. 303-5. See also Peter Gerhard, "Colonial New Spain, 1519-1786: Historical Notes on the Evolution of Minor Political Jurisdictions", in *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, volume twelve, part one, *Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources*, edited by Howard Cline (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), p. 78.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, Toluca had a corregidor while Metepec and Tenango del Valle had *alcaldes mayores*; in practice there was no difference in their administrative functions. These magistrates usually came from outside the area, either from Spain or from Mexico City, but they might have family ties in the region. Inside his district the magistrate would appoint deputies, *tenientes*, for several main subcentres, and these would usually be local creoles.⁷⁰

Because the focus of this study is on Church influence and the importance of the archiepiscopal archive, the structure of religious authority is more immediately relevant than the secular administration. As part of the archbishopric of Mexico, the Valley of Toluca acknowledged the archbishop of Mexico as its highest religious authority. The period under analysis opens with the archbishop Juan de Ortega y Montañez, who had been appointed at the end of the seventeenth century, followed by Francisco José Lanciego y Eguilaz (1712-28), then Juan Antonio de Vizarrón y Eguiarreta (1730-47), and finally Manuel José Rubio y Salinas (1749-65).⁷¹ The Valley of Toluca was originally put under the administration of the Franciscans. In fact, the oldest church in the Valley was founded by them in the town of Toluca, where the first mass was said in 1552.⁷² By 1739 Toluca's monastery was manned by eighteen friars, of whom five preached mass in indigenous languages (four in Nahuatl and one in Otomí). Moreover, the friars promoted six schools for children, one of them especially for the poor (mostly Indians) whose teacher was supported directly by the priest in charge of the parish, and finally there was a school of grammar. Toluca's main church was attached to the monastery of San Francisco, but the town also had other three monasteries belonging to the orders of the discalced Carmelites, the

⁷⁰ On *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* in general, see: C. H. Haring, *The Spanish Empire in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 138-44; Gerhard, "Colonial New Spain", pp. 75-76, 90, 96, 101. On *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* of the Toluca Valley, see: Villaseñor y Sánchez, *Theatro americano*, pp. 190, 196-7; Romero Quiroz, *La ciudad de Toluca*, vol. 1, pp. 312-4, 399-410; José Luis Alanís Boyso, *Corregidores de Toluca. Apuntes para su estudio, 1590-1810* (Mexico: Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estado de México, 1976), pp. 40-60; and José Luis Alanís Boyso, "Corregimiento de Toluca. Pueblos y elecciones de república en el siglo XVIII", *Historia Mexicana* 99 (1976), pp. 455-77.

⁷¹ For a quick reference to the life of the archbishops see Francisco Sosa, *El Episcopado mexicano. Biografía de los Ilmos. Señores Arzobispos de México*, vol.2 (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1962), pp. 70-110.

⁷² AHAM, Box 1739, ff.1-5, "Inventario de la parroquia de esta ciudad, sus pueblos, barrios, lexanías".

Mercedarians, and the hospital order of San Juan de Dios.⁷³ There was a Franciscan monastery in Metepec as well, where the catechism was taught in Nahuatl, and other large Franciscan parishes were Zinacantepec, Calimaya, Capuluac, and Tepejoyuca.⁷⁴ Secular clergy administered other settlements in the Valley from quite a different perspective than that of the friars. Unlike the Franciscans, whose local point of reference was their monastery in Toluca, secular priests looked to Mexico City, where their superiors were located and where they hoped to end their careers. Like the majority of Spaniards in the Valley, they preserved strong links with the capital. At the same time, they were often the highest-ranking permanent Spanish residents in the pueblos, since they were educated men, and most local Spanish residents were of humble origin; as a consequence, their influence in native communities was often correspondingly great.⁷⁵ Finally, besides regular and secular clergy, some Indians called *fiscales*, figures of high rank within indigenous communities, were in charge of many day-to-day church operations.⁷⁶

In the period under study a process of secularisation began, with secular priests gradually replacing the Franciscans. In 1749 the Crown issued the first ordinances for the secularisation of parishes: at the death of a friar who was in charge, the administration was to pass to a secular priest. In line with Enlightenment notions, the government had begun to see the regular orders as an obstacle to the exercise of governmental power, and their replacement was to be carried out during the following two decades.⁷⁷ In replacing the Franciscans the authorities took advantage of the many complaints they were receiving from the Indians of the Valley about inadequate administration of sacraments and doctrinal instruction. As a consequence, the balance between regular orders and secular clergy in the Valley shifted. In 1754 the parish of Metepec was secularised, and in due course the same happened with the most important Franciscan parishes in the jurisdiction of Tenango del Valle (Calimaya,

⁷³ AHAM, Box 1739, ff.1-5, "Inventario de la parroquia de esta ciudad, sus pueblos, barrios, lexanías", f.1.

⁷⁴ Villaseñor y Sánchez, *Teatro americano*, pp. 197-9; Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 227-9.

⁷⁵ Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 225-7.

⁷⁶ Lockhart, "Capital and Province", p. 118; Jarquín, *Formación y desarrollo*, p. 78.

⁷⁷ William B. Taylor, "El camino de los curas y de los Borbones hacia la modernidad", in *Estado, iglesia y sociedad en México. Siglo XIX*, edited by Alvaro Matute, Evelia Trejo and Brian Connaughton (Mexico City: UNAM and Porrúa, 1995), pp. 95-99.

Capuluac, Tepejoyuca). As for Toluca, it was a significant exception, since secularisation did not take place until 1859.⁷⁸ The Bourbon Reforms were to make all branches of the Church much more subordinate to the state, but these developments hardly affected the period of the present study. Until the 1750s and even in the following decade, priests could operate quite freely in their parishes, preserving a strong and quite independent power over their flock and acting as self-appointed judges in matters of morality.⁷⁹

Many of the documents used in the present study were produced by two specific religious tribunals, the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos* of Mexico City and the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca, or at least the documents passed through their hands, so it is worth commenting on them briefly. The *Provisorato* was a court that helped the archbishop judge all cases related to Christian morality and doctrine, such as marital matters, divorces, and irregular relationships. For the archbishopric of Mexico, due to the huge number of cases, the court was divided (just when is unknown) into two sections, the *Provisorato de Españoles, Mestizos y Castas*, and the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos*.⁸⁰ These two courts primarily handled appeals; before a case was presented to them it was examined at a lower level, by a local court, like the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca. Toluca being a Franciscan parish, it appears that the archbishop of Mexico appointed judges from the secular clergy to this court in order to gain some control over the Franciscans in the area. The exact year of the first appointment of a judge in Toluca remains unknown, but two inventories of the archive of the *Juzgado*, one dated 1750 and the other 1767, show the oldest document to date from 1682. Thus it can be deduced that at least from that date forward there was a *Juzgado Eclesiástico* in Toluca.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Gerhard, *Guide*, pp. 330-1; Jarquín, *Formación y desarrollo*, pp. 91-98.

⁷⁹ Taylor, "El camino de los curas", pp. 82-98.

⁸⁰ For more information on ecclesiastical tribunals see Juan Pedro Viqueira, "Una fuente olvidada: el Juzgado Ordinario Diocesano", in *Las fuentes eclesiásticas para la historia social de México*, edited by Brian Connaughton and Andrés González Lira (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana and Instituto Mora, 1996), pp. 81-82, 92-93. Also Gerhard, *Guide*, pp. 17-22.

⁸¹ The oldest document is a book of wedding records from 1682 to 1703. The inventories mentioned are in: AHAM, Box 1750(1), "Inventario del archivo del Juzgado Eclesiástico de S. José de Toluca", and Box 1767, "Inventario de lo que se tiene en este archivo de este Juzgado siendo juez eclesiástico y vicario in capite el señor licenciado doctor Matías José de Eguilas".

The general functions of a local ecclesiastical judge are mentioned in the papers of the Concilio III Provincial Mexicano, in the Título III, “Del oficio del juez ordinario y del vicario”. Judges could deliberate on any case of ordinary jurisdiction, as well as on those cases appealed to the archbishop. Moreover, it was stated that they had to “prohibir o impedir los pecados públicos, como juegos ilícitos, concubinatos, blasfemias, usuras y otros semejantes”.⁸² A better idea of what an ecclesiastical judge did in practice can be obtained from the letter of appointment of the judge Juan Varón de Lara issued by the archbishop Lanciego y Eguilaz the 24th September 1717. His appointment was for the town of San José de Toluca and the pueblos of Metepec and Zinacantepec, together with all the pueblos that fell under the jurisdiction of these three settlements. The judge could deliberate on any civil litigation involving moderate sums of money, except for those cases related to clerical privileges, and on matrimonial and criminal matters. In these cases he had to hear witnesses and collect information to be sent to the general *provisor* (the top level of the religious judiciary system). In particular, he was to collect information on impediments to marriage or dispensations permitting it. Moreover, he had the power to issue a final sentence in all minor criminal cases among Indians, as well as in the defence of Church jurisdiction and immunity. Finally, he could appoint the indigenous *fiscal*, the notary and other officers as aides in his work, and he could seize property and call for the intervention of the justice of the secular state when needed. He was also advised against collecting higher fees than those established in the general schedule (*arancel*) of the archbishopric.⁸³

The Valley of Toluca as a Case Study of Rural Areas

The Valley of Toluca has been chosen as a case study because it represents an indigenous rural area somewhat apart from the core of Spanish colonisation in Mexico

⁸² Mariano Galvan Rivera (ed.), *Concilio III Provincial Mexicano, celebrado en México el año 1585* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Manuel Miró y D. Marsá, 1870), pp. 77-82.

⁸³ AGNBN 1717, vol. 992, exp. 10, “Título de juez eclesiástico de la ciudad de Toluca y de los pueblos y doctrinas de Metepec, Zinacantepec, Tecajique y demás sus sujetos, fecho en el Br. D. Juan Varón de Lara, presbitero”. A very similar letter of appointment was found in AHAM, Box 1767, “Nombramiento de vicario yn capite y juez eclesiástico del partido de Toluca del Br. Matías José de Eguilaz Benavidez por Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana; Secretaría arzobispal de Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana”.

City and thus more likely to preserve its traditions, but at the same time close enough to receive Spanish influence. As a consequence, it is suitable for studying the process of reaction to and assimilation of Spanish culture. As has been briefly mentioned in the previous sections, in the eighteenth century the Valley still preserved much evidence of the vitality of the indigenous communities as well as of the importance of the Spanish presence. As far as economic activities were concerned, typical indigenous crops such as maize and beans existed side by side with Spanish introductions such as livestock. In terms of population, Spaniards were present in significant number in the *cabeceras* and major centres, while Indians outnumbered them in smaller and more dispersed settlements. Thus, while it was possible for the Indians to live in their communities and preserve their own traditions, contacts with Spaniards were not uncommon, creating those occasions of encounter that are essential to a process of resistance/assimilation.

A further reason that favoured the choice of the Toluca Valley as a case study is the availability of rich primary sources, particularly documents generated by the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca. Provincial ecclesiastical courts have scarcely been exploited as a source for colonial history. The documentation of the *Juzgado* of Toluca in particular has never been used before, since it has only recently become available to the public and a serious process of classification of its holdings begun. This study thus rests to a considerable extent on material hitherto unknown and unavailable to the scholarly world. Among the documentation, an extensive corpus of Nahuatl testaments issued in the Valley has been found, providing an indispensable source for the investigation of the indigenous household, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ The numerous Nahuatl testaments in the records of the *Juzgado* are a manifestation of a broader phenomenon, that a surprising proportion of all Nahuatl mundane documents of eighteenth-century central Mexico comes from Toluca. As the study progressed, I was able to draw upon additional similar Nahuatl materials originating in the Archivo General de la Nación, as will be explained at the beginning of Chapter Four.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis presents and analyses some concrete examples of native female reaction to Spanish colonisation in terms of changes and continuities in women's everyday life. Primary sources are mainly litigation and reports of ecclesiastical inspections in Spanish, and testaments in Nahuatl, as indicated in the introductions to the different chapters. With the broad aim of studying indigenous culture, a particular focus is an assessment of the extent of women's resistance to or deviance from the model of life promoted by colonial authorities.

Chapter Two starts by indicating that in the first half of the eighteenth century there was almost no project for formal education of native women, in terms of institutions established for them. After the first phase of evangelisation in the past centuries, in the eighteenth century a policy of 'castellanización' or Hispanisation was in progress, based on preaching and confession rather than schools. An attempt is made to recreate the Christian model of a woman that the Church tried to implement through sermons, confessionals and catechisms of the period. Then the chapter moves on to examine the Church's vision of the Indians in general and of native women in particular, through the analysis of the reports of inspections and of *libros de gobierno*, as well as the correspondence of the archbishops of Mexico with some religious authorities in the area. Of particular interest is the local clergy's vision of native women.

Chapters Three, Four and Five form the core of the thesis. They portray substantial aspects of the everyday life of Nahua women of the time, making it possible to assess how they responded to the Christian model introduced by the Catholic authorities. In the first two chapters the domestic domain is subdivided to consider separately the more intimate level of relations between the couple on the one hand, and the whole family including children and relatives on the other. Chapter Five deals with aspects of women's lives that fell beyond the household into the more general or public sphere.

Thus Chapter Three considers native women's response at the intimate level of the relationship with their husbands. First, the study analyses the age and conditions under

which Nahua women got married, the perception they had of marriage as a sacrament and some cases of polygamy. Relations within marriage are examined, looking at the treatment that women received from their husbands and their reaction. The issue of sexuality is considered, focusing on cases of relationships outside marriage.

Chapter Four aims to present a view of the position of native women inside their household, their relationships with the other members, and some of the social practices generated within the household context. Thus, the perspective extends to a consideration of women's relations with the other members of the family. The chapter is divided into two parts; the first deals with words and concepts used for identification, with some considerations of female kinship terminology and naming patterns. Part II portrays women's inheritance practices and discusses other relevant social practices such as the custodial function of women and how they used executors.

Chapter Five considers women's activities that are visible at a more public level, beyond the boundaries of the household. Thus the chapter is dedicated to aspects of women's everyday life that often begin within the framework of the household but open it up to relations to the external world. Attention is paid to rituals related to death, the cult of Catholic saints, and healing practices classified as idolatrous by colonial authorities. Another way for the private space to open up is through the economic activities that indigenous women practised, of which the cultivation of maguey and production of alcoholic beverages are considered.

Then the dissertation ends with a summary of the findings of the chapters, an assessment of the multiple dimensions involved in women's reaction to Church-inspired models in the Valley of Toluca, a discussion of the implications of the thesis for gender studies, and suggestions for future research. In addition, due to the relevance that Nahuatl testaments have for the methodology of the research here presented, some examples are made available and briefly analysed in the appendix.

Chapter 2: Models of Christian Life

In order to analyse the various forms of resistance and assimilation displayed by the Nahua women in the Toluca Valley, it is essential to know first the model of life that the Catholic Church attempted to impose with the support of the Crown. At the beginning of the colonial period the attempt was made to instil new values and beliefs in the indigenous population through *colegios* and schools. However, during the first half of the eighteenth century there was no programme of formal education for native women, but a generic plan of *castellanización*. Women were to be assimilated into Spanish culture and religion basically through preaching and confession.

After considering the development of formal education in the early colonial period, this chapter will analyse some eighteenth century sermons, confessionals, and catechisms in order to reconstruct the Christian model of a woman that the Church wished to apply. These were the main formal instruments through which the Church expressed its pastoral power and aimed to discipline the natives and forge them into orderly subjects and believers. However, the application of the female Christian archetype in New Spain was highly influenced by the clergy who were appointed there. Broadening the perspective, it is therefore useful to consider the Mexican clergy's approach to the indigenous world and the conceptions they had of the natives. Through this analysis, it will become evident that there was a distinction between those who held the major positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, especially the archbishops of Mexico, and the local clergy who were required to implement the policy of the Church in the Toluca Valley. The archbishops, at least for the selected period, advocated that priests should serve the Indians with love and compassion, as fathers and shepherds. Nevertheless, the local clergy of the Valley proved to be less idealistic and more interested in secular affairs, including making a living out of their posts. However, priests often intervened in cases of mistreatment, adultery, informal unions or idolatry. The discussion of the clergy will therefore help toward a better understanding of the relationship between the local Church and Nahua women.

Women's Education

At the beginning of the colonial period the Church showed a deep interest in the formal education of the indigenous population and many institutions were created. Education was seen as a means to implement evangelisation, a major objective for both the Crown and the Church, that would convert the Indians into disciplined subjects. Indeed evangelisation meant not only the transmission of Christian beliefs, but also the establishment of a way of living; this difficult process, it was thought, required the founding of schools. Little is known about the degree of success, extent and manner of functioning of the early ecclesiastical educational effort. However, something can be said of its aims and rationale, as well as of certain institutional aspects of the campaign. The following discussion reflects this unbalance in sources.

The Nahuas had already developed a school system early before the Spanish arrived, so that the organisation of formal education was not viewed as an incomprehensible novelty brought by the conquistadores. The indigenous system, as it is described in postconquest chronicles, was based on two types of schools, the *calmecac* which were attended by the sons and daughters of the nobility, while other children went to the *telpochcalli*. While the former trained children for high office and religious careers, the latter taught military skills and more routine services for the religion and state. It is noteworthy that both males and females were expected to attend and they had a similar education, although they were taught in separate buildings and classes. However, girls were supposed to leave the school by the age of fifteen since they got married earlier than the boys, who remained at least two years longer.¹

When the Spanish arrived they did not preserve the ancient schooling system but attempted to implant a new one to transmit their culture. However, as will be seen

¹ On education among the ancient Nahuas see: Alfredo López Austin, *La educación de los antiguos Nahuas* (Mexico City: SEP Cultura and Ediciones El Caballito, 1985); Alfredo López Austin, *Educación mexicana* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1994); Frances Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *The Codex Mendoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), vols 2 and 4, ff. 56-70; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1969), pp. 298-307. For ages of marriage see Robert McCaa, "Marriageways in Mexico and Spain, 1500-1900", *Continuity and Change* 9 (1994), p. 14. The entire literature is based on posterior sources, so that we know very little about the actuality and extent of preconquest education.

shortly, some features of the prehispanic system survived. Due to its traditional role in education, the perceived efficacy of the pastoral power (as we have seen in Chapter One) and the fact that it was represented throughout the territory, the Church was considered the most suitable authority to create educational institutions in New Spain. Following the model already employed in Europe, the clergy sought to educate the two sexes separately, using different methods and teaching different tasks. From an early stage the education of native women received special attention, starting with the Franciscans, who were the first order to reach New Spain in 1524. As friar Toribio de Benavente or Motolinía wrote: “no era bueno de sólo los hombres tener cuidado, pues ambos sexos hizo Dios en el principio, y después de caídos a ambos vino a buscar, curar y salvar [...]”²

Women were expected to remain in their homes undertaking cooking, weaving and raising children, so they did not need education in those skills that men required to work outside the household, participating in community matters and interacting with Spanish authorities. As a consequence, in the first years after the Conquest, while young boys of noble families were taught Christian doctrine, reading and writing in classes inside the monasteries, all native girls both *principales* (nobles) and *macehuales* (commoners) were educated in the patio of the parish church or monastery, where they were taught the Christian doctrine, but not reading and writing.³

The friars' aim was to convert the children of the upper class first, so that they could be an example to the others and, once ready to marry, they could form new families according to Christian principles. For the realisation of the project of evangelisation it soon became evident that women's role was essential, since they acted as cultural mediators inside their families. As a consequence, the first schools for women were planned, using the same model employed for native boys. This meant that girls of the nobility would have to leave their families and live in the *colegios* known as

² Toribio de Benavente, or Motolinía, *Memoriales o libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1971), p. 258.

³ Josefina Muriel, *La sociedad novohispana y sus colegios de niñas* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1995), pp. 45-47; Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México. Codice franciscano* (Mexico City: Editorial Salvador Chavez Hayhoe, 1941), pp. 55-56.

internados. The first school of this kind was founded in 1529 in Texcoco, in the palace of Nezahualcoyotl, by the Franciscan Motolinía, and it was shortly followed by a *colegio* in Huejotzingo and finally by 1531 another one had been founded in Mexico City.⁴ But the friars needed female teachers for the girls and these were drawn from the *Tercera Orden de San Francisco* in Spain. This order consisted of lay people, married or single, who decided to live according to the Christian principles of the religious order of San Francisco and dedicate themselves to social services such as education or working in hospitals. The first *maestras* for the indigenous girls were then *terciarias* and they helped to establish the schools in the three places above mentioned, and between 1530 and 1545 in Otumba, Tepeapulco, Tlaxcala, Cholula, Coyoacan, Chalco, Cuauhtitlan, Xochimilco, Tehuacan and Tlamanalco.⁵ The bishop of Mexico Zumárraga strongly supported the extension of education to native girls: "La cosa que mi pensamiento ocupa y mi voluntad más se inclina [...] es que en esta ciudad y en cada pueblo del obispado haya un monasterio grande en que quepan mucho número de niñas, hijas de indios."⁶

The task of educating girls in the *colegios* was mainly to introduce them to the model of a Christian wife and mother. Girls were encouraged to marry those boys instructed by the friars, so that the Christian concept of marriage could be spread. Given this aim, teaching was to be based essentially on instruction in the Christian doctrine and prayers in Spanish, and also practical works related to household. It is true that indigenous girls already received informal instruction on female everyday activities simply by following their mother's example, but the Spanish teachers added to the typical tasks some novelties such as weaving wool and linen. In the process the *maestras* developed a sense of protection toward their pupils and tried to give them some means to defend themselves against the abuses of both Spanish and indigenous

⁴ Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1971), pp. 318, 419-20; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, "Paideia cristiana o educación elitista: un dilema en la Nueva España del siglo XVI", *Historia mexicana* 33 (1984), pp. 191-2; José M. Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista (empresa franciscana en México)* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1974), pp. 280-3.

⁵ Kobayashi, *Educación*, pp. 283-5; Josefina Muriel, *Las mujeres de Hispanoamérica. Época colonial* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), pp. 63-73; Muriel, *Sociedad novohispana*, pp. 53-73; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación en la época colonial. El mundo indígena* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1990), pp. 81-82.

⁶ Quoted in Muriel, *Mujeres*, p. 73; Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación*, p. 82.

men. Particularly, they were struck by the fact that Indian women were often used to seal alliances among families and they tried to teach native girls how to protect their honour and form “una nueva conciencia de su calidad de personas, para que no se dejaran regalar o vender por sus padres a los poderosos españoles o a los caciques indígenas.”⁷ In this they had the strong support of the bishop Zumárraga, who asked the Crown for permission to separate by force girls from their parents in order that they could be educated in the *internados* and removed from the bad influence of their families. The royal decree of 1538 did not back such a strong measure against indigenous practice, however, it authorised the bishop to denounce any abuse to the viceroy, who could order a punishment.⁸

Besides the *colegios*, which were boarding schools, the friars wished to institute a more general system of schools for Indians all around New Spain. It was based on attendance for just a few hours a day, while boys and girls resided with their families. The educational objective was the teaching of the Spanish language, which was normally done through books that illustrated the Christian doctrine, and the two sexes were instructed in separate classes. The Franciscan friar Pedro de Gante established the first school of this kind for native girls in 1526, but the majority of the schools developed from the 1550s on, following the establishment of doctrinas and then parishes in New Spain. In fact, this system followed the Spanish tradition of parish and municipal schools, where the priest was in charge of organising the school. However, because of the large number of schools needed, especially in the countryside, priests had to rely on the indigenous *maestros* to carry on lessons. Indigenous teachers were prepared to explain the doctrine in Spanish and were supervised and examined periodically by the parish priest. The teacher in each Indian community that had a school was paid for out of the funds of the *caja de comunidad*.⁹ These schools were therefore established within the communities themselves and to a certain extent were ruled by them. These details, together with the less disruptive impact on the families since their children were not taken away, may help to explain why this kind of schools

⁷ Muriel, *Mujeres*, p. 64.

⁸ Muriel, *Sociedad novohispana*, pp. 74-80; Kobayashi, *Educación*, pp. 284-5. An example of abuse against indigenous girls is given in Mendieta, *Memoriales*, p. 260.

⁹ Muriel, *Sociedad novohispana*, pp. 91-4; Muriel, *Mujeres*, pp. 78-79.

continued in some fashion throughout the colonial period, even if they expanded mostly during the eighteenth century, as will be described below. On the other hand, the *colegios* for girls ran into serious trouble only a decade after their foundation.

One factor that destabilised the system of *internados* was that by the middle of the 1530s some teachers started abandoning the schools to teach in private Spanish houses where they were better paid. After the first years of the conquest, Spanish immigration and the formation of creole families increased the demand for education, and private individuals in the Hispanic sector often could afford to pay better salaries than the colonial authorities. From the native perspective as well, the fathers were reluctant to entrust their daughters to the friars since it weakened their control over their daughters. Young girls were educated according to Spanish habits, so it was said that Indian boys were often reluctant to marry them fearing they had lost those traditional female skills. In particular, native girls were taught a different concept of relationships and work inside the family according to which the woman did not have to work to support her husband and children, but the man was held responsible for it. In addition, a major epidemic in 1545 caused high mortality and *colegios* were revealed to be places where diseases could spread easily. As a consequence, many girls died and many more were withdrawn by their families.¹⁰

More generally, by that time some key conditions in the New World had started to change: the indigenous population had declined dramatically, while new economic activities such as mining and Spanish-style agriculture brought them into closer contact with the Spanish civil population, and the idealism of the friars began to decline in some respects. Meanwhile, the increasing Spanish population channelled the attention toward the education of the *criollos*. This trend was confirmed by the Third Provincial Council of New Spain in 1585. The two previous Councils in 1555 and 1565 had stressed the potential of the native population to benefit from education. However, the reports of the Third Council showed that, although native education was

¹⁰ Kobayashi, *Educación*, pp. 286-92; Muriel, *Sociedad novohispana*, pp. 71, 87-89; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, "Tradición y ruptura en la educación femenina del siglo XVI", in *Presencia y transparencia: La mujer en la historia de México*, edited by Carmen Ramos Escandón et al. (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1987), pp. 40-41.

still a major objective, there was more focus on the trouble that the Indians caused than on the benefits that could derive from it.¹¹ It may be relevant to note that this change in attitude towards native education corresponded to the advancement of secularisation. The Third Council was dominated by the secular clergy, while the regular orders that undertook the first steps in providing education started to decline in central New Spain. The *colegios* that had been supported by the friars had decayed while parish schools, supervised generally by the secular clergy, remained active.

For the reasons analysed above, the first institutions to be abandoned were those for the education of native women since their usual task was housework, for which they did not seem to require specific education. As for their instruction in terms of Christian doctrine and morality, it could be achieved through sermons and catechism. Some clergy also believed that female education in *colegios* was no longer necessary; after the first generation, the parents who had been converted could teach their daughters at home: “Después, como los padres vinieron al bautismo, no hubo necesidad de más ser enseñadas de cuanto supiesen bien ser cristianas.”¹² Therefore, enclosing the native girls in *internados* under their teachers’ supervision was no longer necessary, but education itself was not abandoned, rather it was not carried out through formal institutions. As previously mentioned, parish schools were a sort of exception since they continued in their educational tasks; however, their dependence on indigenous teachers and community support makes it more difficult to include them in a formal system of Spanish education.

This situation remained the same until the eighteenth century, when a new interest in the education of all social groups arose following the ideas introduced by the Enlightenment. For men of the eighteenth century, no transformation of the society was possible without education; giving people the instruments to improve themselves was essential to modernisation. In particular, following the influence of Rousseau, the Enlightenment suggested a return to a more natural and primitive world, which

¹¹ Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “Del tercero al cuarto concilio provincial mexicano 1585-1771”, *Historia Mexicana* 35 (1985), pp. 7-8. By the same author, see also: “Paideia cristiana”, pp. 185-213; and “Tradición y ruptura”, pp. 40-41, 47. Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 382-3.

¹² Muriel, *Sociedad novohispana*, p. 88; Benavente, *Memoriales*, pp. 258-9.

originated a renewed interest in indigenous societies. Therefore New Spain was considered a suitable place to experiment with new models of society, and the country saw a revival in native education, which became evident in the second half of the century. In this context, women once again became important in education because of their role as cultural mediators. This coincided with the application of the Bourbon Reforms that stimulated a new interest in education to promote changes in economic and political realms.¹³ The increase in the native population during the eighteenth century has also been seen as one reason more for the renewed interest in education since it raised again the issue of the control and organisation of indigenous groups.¹⁴ After the dramatic collapse that continued until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the population stabilised and started to grow in the 1650s. The increase continued in the eighteenth century, but it was periodically slowed by epidemics and agricultural crises. Population trends varied significantly from one region to the other, but Peter Gerhard suggests that the indigenous population of the three jurisdictions of the Toluca Valley was increasing between the end of the seventeenth century and mid-eighteenth century.

A sign that anticipated the major changes that occurred in the second half of the century was the foundation of the first nunnery for Indian girls in 1724, the Franciscan convent of Corpus Christi in Mexico City. For a long time native women were considered unprepared for a religious vocation because of their weak temperament and tendency to get married or live in informal unions rather than accepting chastity. Then, after almost two centuries of Christian instruction, it seemed that the authorities were ready to acknowledge the possibility. The viceroy don Baltasar de Zúñiga made the formal request to the Crown for the establishment of the convent in 1719 and it was opened a few years later. Some Spanish nuns were initially entrusted with its

¹³ Pilar Foz y Foz, *La revolución pedagógica en Nueva España: 1754-1820* (Madrid: Instituto de estudios y documentos históricos, 1981), pp. 197, 258-9, 416-7; Elisa Luque Alcaide, *La educación en Nueva España en el siglo XVIII* (Sevilla: Escuela de estudios hispano-americanos, 1970), pp. 1-5; Arrom, *Women*, p. 15.

¹⁴ Luque Alcaide, *Educación*, p. 282. On the population patterns see: Linda A. Newson, "Explicación de las variaciones regionales de las tendencias demográficas en la América española colonial: el caso de México", *Historia Mexicana* 41 (1992), p. 539; Lourdes Márquez Morfín, "La evolución cuantitativa de la población novohispana: siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII", in *El poblamiento de México. Una visión histórico-demográfica*, vol. 2, edited by AAVV. (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Población, 1993), pp. 38-39, 45; Gerhard, *Guide*, pp. 176, 272, 331.

organisation and administration, but it was envisaged that after the first twenty years, Indian nuns could take over the responsibility. It followed the model of the old female convents in the sense that only daughters of the nobility, in this case Indian daughters, could enter.¹⁵

Nuns, however, lived retired from the world and followed activities typical of all convents. What was really significant in terms of the impact on the whole indigenous society was the foundation of new institutions for the education of native girls. The protagonist of this movement was the Jesuit order, and particularly the so-called *Compañía de María*, a female order inspired by Jesuit spirituality that saw its origin in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The nuns of the order followed the rules of the Jesuits and took the Virgin Mary as an example to apply in their lives. They were particularly dedicated to the education of girls, which they provided free of charge and with no distinction of class or ethnic group. The fact that they did not require any payment for the instruction enabled education to be opened up to many girls, while previously only a small proportion had benefited.¹⁶ After the attempt at establishing *colegios* in the sixteenth century, no institution existed for the education of indigenous girls. As a consequence, most of them had remained without instruction, although some went to *escuelas de amigas*, or *migas*. These were voluntary classes of few hours per day given in the private houses of some Spanish women, but the quality was generally very poor. It was because of this situation that the archbishop Rubio y Salinas warmly welcomed the initiative of the *Compañía*, which employed well-educated nuns for the task.¹⁷

The nuns arrived in Mexico City in 1753 and the first institution called the *Convento-colegio del Pilar y Enseñanza* was founded one year later. It was a convent where Spanish nuns lived, and girls of the same ethnic group were admitted as *internas*. In

¹⁵ For more information on the convent of Corpus Christi, see: Ann Miriam Gallagher, "The Indian Nuns of Mexico City's Monasterio of Corpus Christi, 1724-1821", in *Latin American Women*, pp. 155-66; and Muriel, *Mujeres*, pp. 138-41. On indigenous nuns, see also Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela, *Colonial Angels* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), especially pp. 76-97. On inadequacy of native women to take vows, see Juan de Torquemada. *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1977-79), p. 168.

¹⁶ Foz, *Revolución*, pp. 6-7, 89, 205-7.

¹⁷ Foz, *Revolución*, pp. 178-9.

addition, the nuns gave classes for indigenous girls, but the latter were not allowed to stay as residents. The first *colegio-recogimiento* for Indian girls, called *Colegio de Guadalupe de Indias*, started operating in 1754, but it was officially approved only in 1759. It was not a convent, so that although indigenous girls could reside there, they did not take vows. It also provided lessons to all classes of girls as *externas*. Although it was formally founded by the Jesuits rather than by the *Compañía de María*, it was involved in female education and it was basically organised under the same rules.¹⁸ Due to the fact that education in the two institutions was free, it can be said that they were the first public schools for women in Mexico City. As for the curriculum, both the schools provided classes in reading, writing, Christian doctrine and housework, but whereas in the *Colegio del Pilar y Enseñanza* there were lessons in Latin and arithmetic for the Spanish or *mestizo* residents, the *Colegio de Guadalupe* had a strong emphasis on basic female activities. Therefore, despite the new initiatives, the education provided for girls did not include new scientific subjects. It remained based on the classical model of Christian doctrine and housework, while Spanish literacy was only for those girls who proved to have an inclination for the subject.¹⁹

The first half of the eighteenth century, the period selected here for the research, can be considered a transition toward the major changes that appeared in the second half of the century. During this time there were still no new schools for the formal education of indigenous women, and the Church used preaching, teaching the catechism, and confession to transmit Christian values. However, the Church had already begun to perceive the importance of a process of *castellanización* to integrate the natives into the colonial society: the new values had to be assimilated in depth, and conversion alone was not enough. Acknowledging this situation, the Crown issued a royal decree on the 5 of June 1754 by which all archbishops and bishops in New Spain were to appoint teachers to explain the Christian doctrine in Spanish to the indigenous communities that asked for it. The system of parish schools that was first established towards the end of the sixteenth century was revitalised and flourished.²⁰ The new

¹⁸ Foz, *Revolución*, pp. 227, 417-20; Muriel, *Mujeres*, p. 100.

¹⁹ Arrom, *Women*, pp. 15, 17-18; Luque Alcaide, *Educación*, pp. 279-82, 286-90.

²⁰ Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación*, pp. 15, 150-1. Luque Alcaide, *Educación*, p. 285; Muriel, *Sociedad novohispana*, p. 35.

stimulus arose from complaints coming from the archbishops of Mexico, principally José Lanciego y Eguilaz and Manuel Rubio y Salinas, about the neglect of education especially in the countryside.²¹ In practice, the majority of the indigenous population had no basic literacy in Spanish and received only sporadic teaching in the Christian doctrine. As a consequence, the two Archbishops stimulated the founding of schools for children in rural areas, emphasising their role in the process of integrating the countryside into colonial society. Rubio y Salinas was particularly effective in his campaign for *castellanización*.²² In fact, he contributed to the development of an incipient structure for education in rural areas that aimed to go beyond the simple classes of catechism, entrusting the native community with the responsibility of maintaining the school building and paying the teacher.

Reality was rather different from the strategy planned by the Archbishops. The establishment and organisation of schools depended in practice on the commitment of parish priests. Due to the limited number of clergy and the many tasks a parish priest had to fulfil, it was often difficult for them to spend time in organising schools.²³ However, some also neglected their duty, and this will be considered below in the discussion of local clergy. As a consequence, education in the majority of the rural communities remained basically in the hands of indigenous teachers. Despite the new project for rural education therefore, attempts to acculturate indigenous children by these means were largely unsuccessful. Moreover, there was no specific recommendation for the education of Indian girls so in the end the Church relied on the traditional instruments of preaching, catechism and confession to impose the ideal concept of a Christian woman in indigenous communities.

²¹ Already in the seventeenth century, don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, bishop of Puebla, had stressed the abandonment in which the rural population was living, but he had remained a lone voice until the eighteenth century. On that, see: Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, "La ortodoxia imposible: doctrina y práctica social en el campo novohispano", in *La ciudad y el campo en la historia de México*. Papers Presented at the VII Conference of Mexican and United States Historians (Mexico City: UNAM, 23-26 October 1985), pp. 860-4, 866; Luque Alcaide, *Educación*, p. 285.

²² In Church pronouncements it would seem that *castellanización*, Hispanisation, was something occurring entirely through conscious Church policies. In fact, Spanish influence had already been penetrated among the indigenous population through a much more pervasive medium: centuries of everyday contact between Hispanic and indigenous people; such contact was growing more extensive and intense in the time being studied here. This is not the place to consider such a large and still not well studied phenomenon, but it is important to note its potential relevance.

²³ Gonzalbo Aizpuru, "La ortodoxia", p. 866.

A Woman's Life: The Vision of the Catholic Church

The Model

The Catholic Church's view of the nature and role of the woman derived from Medieval theology, according to which she was seen as the source of all evil, the Devil's instrument. Her subordination to the man was justified by her supposed fragility and inferiority, and her need to be guided and controlled. Protection was the key word that recurred in the Church's discourse about the woman as well as in society's perception of the relationship between a man and a woman. Women were so weak that they needed to be protected by civil and religious authorities, which had the duty to support institutions such as family, marriage or nunnery that could shelter them.²⁴ A woman's deemed fragility determined that within the family she could not act in an autonomous way and that her natural position was inside the house, undertaking the housework, while the man was to provide for the maintenance of the whole family. It was envisaged that keeping the woman under male control helped to preserve her honour and purity, so important at the Church's eyes, but it was considered difficult to defend since the woman, as an irrational being, was subject to passion and transgression. In fact, women were usually blamed for crimes that involved morality, such as fornication, informal unions, adultery or prostitution, as well as for quarrels with their husbands or lovers. This conception of female sexual inconstancy was strongly influenced by a double moral standard: female sexual unconformity, especially adultery, was considered more serious than for males, and as a consequence it was more severely punished. Underlying this idea was the view that through adultery a woman had failed to comply with the most important obligation of her marriage, which was the preservation of her husband's honour. For a man it was different; he was primarily asked to provide for the maintenance and protection of his

²⁴ Andrés de Olmos, *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios (paleografía de un texto nahuatl)* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1990), pp. 47-49. Lavrin, *Latin American Women*, pp. 48-49.

family, so that in his case negligence of family obligations was more offensive than adultery.²⁵

As a consequence of this vision, the Church tried to restrict women's space of operation to the house, where she was easier to control, and to establish rules and models to which domestic life had to conform.²⁶ From this perspective, as already mentioned in Chapter One, Christian ideology combined with Spanish civil law to assert female subordination. Ideas began to change with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Some intellectuals acknowledged women's rational ability and potential if stimulated by a proper education. However, despite the interest in developing women's education, a traditional view prevailed: women were weaker than men and needed male guidance.²⁷ Woman's role in society was being questioned, but for major changes we have to wait until the turn of the century.

The Church's vision that originated in Spain was exported to the New World, where the clergy tried to impose the model of Christian life not only on Hispanic women, but also on the Indians. If a woman was normally viewed as fragile, an indigenous woman was even more vulnerable due to the fact that she was Indian, so she needed special care.²⁸ In practice, she continued to be conceived as the Devil's favourite instrument to deceive man due to her weakness and temperament. According to Susan Deeds, the lack of morality of indigenous women was vital to maintain an ethnic social hierarchy in the New World.²⁹ The words of the friars involved in the educational mission during the sixteenth century provide vivid expressions of this vision, as in the case of the Franciscan Andrés de Olmos:

²⁵ Lavrin, *Latin American Women*, pp. 35-36; Gabriel Haslip-Viera, *Crime and Punishment in Late Colonial Mexico City 1692-1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), pp. 56-57.

²⁶ Kellogg, *Law*, pp. 105-6, 114-5; Lavrin, *Sexuality and Marriage*, p. 65; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru (ed.), *Familias novohispanas siglos XVI al XIX. Seminario de Historia de la familia* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1991), p. 12. See also Susan M. Deeds, "Double Jeopardy: Indian Women in Jesuit Missions of Nueva Vizcaya", in *Indian Women*, pp. 260-2.

²⁷ Among the intellectuals who defended women's potential were Benito Feijó and the Count of Campomanes in Spain, and José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi in Mexico (see Asunción Lavrin, "In Search of the Colonial Woman in Mexico: the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in *Latin American Women*, pp. 27-29). As for Spanish civil law, see Chapter One.

²⁸ Lewis, "The 'Weakness' of Women", pp. 73-94.

²⁹ Deeds, "Double Jeopardy", pp. 261-2.

“Las mujeres se dejan mucho dominar por la ira y el enojo, fácilmente se encolerizan, son celosas, envidiosas; haciendo sufrir, imponiendo tormentos a otros quieren aplacar su corazón y anhelan con facilidad que les pase a las gentes cosas tristes y penosas. Por eso se dice que siguen al Diablo para que las ayude a hacer aquello que desean.”³⁰

Or again, the Dominican Agustín Dávila Padilla described a situation in which the Devil tempted a friar by taking the appearance of an Indian woman who was in love with him:

“Cuando fue tiempo de permitir algún descanso a su trabajado cuerpo, comenzó a dormir, al propio tiempo que el demonio estaba velando, y atizando el fuego en aquel miserable corazón de la mujer atrevida. Llegó al aposento del religioso, y sin considerar que era hombre de Dios, dedicado a su servicio, ministro del Santísimo Sacramento del Altar, y casto con raro ejemplo, entró en su busca.”

At that point, the friar took a shoe and beat the woman on her head “donde tan vano pensamiento había cabido.”³¹ On the other hand, the Church acknowledged the significant role that indigenous women played as mediators in the transmission of new values in their families and communities. According to the friars, native women were particularly scrupulous in their activities and role within the family: “[...] no como muchas de nuestras naturales, que quieren mandar en casa más que sus maridos [...]. Hayan vergüenza y confusión las tales, y tomen ejemplo de estas infieles que así obedecen y aman a sus maridos, y así los sirven”.³²

Native women were seen as an essential element of indigenous society in terms of *castellanización* that the Church could not and would not ignore. The strategy was therefore to confine women’s influence to the domestic realm, and to control this space through the introduction of new habits and models, as had been done with Spanish women.³³ However, the clergy knew little about the relationships and activities intertwined in indigenous households, so that the implementation of the

³⁰ Andrés de Olmos, *Tratado de hechicerías*, pp. 48-49.

³¹ Agustín Dávila Padilla, *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la provincia de Santiago de México, de la orden de predicadores* (Mexico City: Editorial Academia Literaria, 1955), pp. 506-7.

³² Benavente, *Memoriales*, pp. 315-6; Torquemada, *Monarquía*, p. 219. On indigenous women as cultural mediators, see Kidwell, “Indian Women”, pp. 97-107.

³³ Louise M. Burkhart, “Mexica Women on the Home Front”, in *Indian Women*, pp. 25-54; Schroeder, Introduction, *Indian Women*, pp. 9-10.

strategy was often more problematic than expected. In Susan Schroeder's view, for Indian women the house was a reproduction of the universe in microcosm, and they drew their power from the execution of gendered assignments that were deemed essential to the preservation of the cosmic order.³⁴ In any case, the household was the basic building block of sociopolitical organisation, and women were crucial within it. It proved difficult to change habits and beliefs that were at the base of the indigenous world. Indeed, Serge Gruzinski has noted that the indigenous private sphere appeared to be more resistant to the process of Christianisation than the public one. Activities and objects of everyday life survived more easily due to their apparent irrelevance, which protected them from destruction.³⁵ An example was sweeping. A good housewife was supposed to start her day by sweeping the house, something that was totally normal and innocent at the friars' eyes, but it carried a hidden meaning for the Indians. Brooms had the power to brush away together with the dust the night spirits that created chaos during the dark, so that order could be established at the beginning of a new day. Or again, cooking bore a supernatural meaning due to its association with fire, which was regarded as a god, and with elements that were gods themselves, such as maize. Maize and the preparation of tortillas were at the core of female activities. Women spent almost six hours per day grinding and the grinding stone was another object that associated the house with divine forces; if it broke popular lore indicated that the time had come for a member of the household to die.³⁶ All these details help us realise how the indigenous home enclosed a protected space where there was continuity of old beliefs and traditions that might have the potential to encourage resistance. This was regarded as extremely dangerous by the clergy, whose effort to convert the Indians would be vain if at an intimate level they preserved their traditions. As a consequence, the battle to penetrate into the private sphere became extremely important. In the words of Louise Burkhart female domestic space became the Church's "final frontier".³⁷

³⁴ Schroeder, Introduction, *Indian Women*, p. 16.

³⁵ Gruzinski, *Conquest*, pp. 152-3, 174.

³⁶ On Nahuatl women's everyday activities, see Burkhart, "Mexica Women", pp. 33-44. On the importance of grinding in Mexican society, see Arnold J. Bauer, "Millers and Grinders: Technology and Household Economy in Meso-America", *Agricultural History* 64 (1990), pp. 1-17.

³⁷ Burkhart, "Mexica Women", pp. 41-42.



In this process, the clergy considered it essential to introduce one model that could operate as an example and point of reference for native women. Among saints and *beatas*, the model of the Virgin Mary was above all the symbol of a perfect Christian life for every woman, whether Spanish or Indian. During the early stages of the conquest the Virgin Mary was adopted as protectress of the Spaniards and symbol of their power. At that time, the cult of the Virgin was extremely popular in Castile, where she was regarded as a queen, bride, virgin, mother and intercessor. In New Spain devotion focused especially on the last two roles, such that the Virgin Mary became a charitable mother and a beloved intercessor who would soften God's judgement.³⁸ The introduction of Christian images was never a simple matter, since they generated controversial interpretations and were filtered through indigenous perception. Despite difficulties, the Virgin Mary penetrated substantially into the indigenous world, transforming the Indian *imaginaire*. The spread of the Marian cult in the form of the Virgin of Guadalupe was an expression of this multifaceted reality. In 1531 Our Lady of Guadalupe was said to have appeared to an Indian man called Juan Diego at Tepeyac, outside Mexico City, leaving her image on his cloak. Despite her appearance to an Indian, it seems that her cult developed first among the Spanish and creoles during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and only later became extremely popular in indigenous communities.³⁹ On the basis of baptismal records for the Valley of Mexico and the surrounding areas, William Taylor has revealed that the names Mary and Guadalupe were more popular in provincial cities and creole ranching areas than in Indian districts, and more non-Indian women than Indian ones were named after them. Therefore the cult of Guadalupe started among the Spaniards and was later used by the clergymen to bring native people into the church.

Without entering into the analysis of this cult, it is worth recalling that the Indians venerated Our Lady of Guadalupe mainly as a cheerful mother, who compassionately listened to their sorrows in order to remedy them, protect them and give them shelter,

³⁸ William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred. Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 279-80.

³⁹ Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 277-8, 282, 288-9. See also Stafford Poole, "The Woman of the Apocalypse", in *The Church in Colonial Latin America*, edited by John F. Schwaller (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2000), pp. 210, 216-7, 221; and David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix. Our*

as appears from this formula translated from Nahuatl: "Am I, your mother, not here? Are you not under my protective shade, my shadow? Are you not in the security of my lapfold, in my carrying gear?"⁴⁰ The ancient Nahuas were accustomed to worship a mother goddess, *tonantzin* (our mother), so the adoption of the image of the Virgin was eased by this parallel. Indeed, the Virgin Mary was described in the invocations of indigenous wills as *totlaçonantzin*, 'our precious mother', which recalled the image of a mother goddess parallel to the father god of the ancient tradition, rather than the European forms 'our lady' or 'mother of God'. Needless to say this caused a great debate within the Church, since it was seen as a preservation of ancient beliefs, but also as a devotion which would help their conversion.⁴¹ Yet, the colonial Church supported the cult of the Virgin Mary continuously from the early years of the Conquest, as can be seen in the reports of the Provincial Councils, where the days of celebration for the Virgin were listed, and through the declarations of all archbishops. In terms of worship in the domestic realm, the Virgin seems to have been very popular, dominating the array of Christian religious images on home altars, as will be explained in detail in Chapter Five, and being constantly invoked as defender against the temptations of the Devil.⁴² This is an important feature of religious belief when evaluating the power of penetration of the Christian model of woman in indigenous everyday life.

Finally, before analysing the instruments that the Church used to apply the model of a Christian woman, it is worth noting that, despite all difficulties the Church had to face, evangelisation left visible traces in everyday indigenous practices and relations. The adoption of a new concept of marriage, the predominance of a nuclear family, the

Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 81-88.

⁴⁰ Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole, and James Lockhart, *The Story of Guadalupe. Luis Laso de la Vega's 'Huei Tlamahuiçoltica' of 1649* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 79; also the final prayer to the Virgin at p. 127. For a comment on the innovative perspective introduced by Sousa, Poole, and Lockhart see Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, pp. 358-9.

⁴¹ On the Marian cult, see Gruzinski, *Conquest*, pp. 188-91; and Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 249, 252, the latter especially for the Nahuatl definition of the Virgin. See also Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, pp. 2-3. On the tolerance of the persistence of pre-Hispanic elements see Cervantes, *Devil*, pp. 54-55.

⁴² On the Church's support of the cult see Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 280, 285. On the Christian images in indigenous households see Stephanie Wood, "Adopted Saints: Christian Images in Nahua Testaments of late colonial Toluca", *The Americas* 47(3) (1991), p. 272. On the Virgin's role of defender see Cervantes, *Devil*, pp. 67-68.

importance of female honour and purity and the different perception of gender roles were only some of the inevitable and definitive changes that the Christian model provoked in Nahua women's life.⁴³ Some of these aspects have already been discussed, some others will be examined later.

The Instruments

The new model of life for a Christian woman was introduced into the indigenous mentality through various means. Sermons were very popular for immediate communication with the congregation, and those preached on special occasions were often published in books that the clergy could acquire to have a secure source of inspiration for any situation. Only very few of the published sermons in the eighteenth century were composed by rural parish priests; the majority was given in Mexico City and published there. In the fifteen examples considered for the research, only two sermons were given in the Toluca Valley, one in Toluca itself for the feast day of the death of the Virgin and the other in San Bartolomé Ozolotepec, for the dedication of the church. Sermons were given every Sunday or feast day, when people congregated in the parish church, and they represented a direct way of addressing those matters pertinent to evangelisation and Christian morality.

Preachers were normally distinguished clerics, either secular or regular, professors or lecturers of theology in a monastery or in the Real Universidad of Mexico City (or even rectors of the same university), and they often combined their posts with the position of agents (*provisor* or *calificador*) of the Holy Office. Their sermons were given at special events such as the foundation of a convent, the dedication of a church, the celebration of feast days in the Christian ritual calendar (principally the Conception, the death of the Virgin Mary, and Corpus Christi), or the death of a distinguished person. Sometimes they were dedicated to specific persons such as the founder or head of a convent, or religious and civil authorities. The structure of sermons varied according to the topic, but in general they used many allegoric images

⁴³ Kellogg, *Law*, pp. 112-17; also Susan Kellogg, "Hegemony out of Conquest: The First Two Centuries of Spanish Rule in Central Mexico", *Radical History Review* 53 (1992), pp. 36-37; and Gruzinski, *Conquest*, pp. 152-3.

and were full of references to the Bible or the Gospel, that were adapted and related to the subject to be discussed, giving advice on good behaviour and morality. The sermons preached at somebody's funeral were mainly concerned with that person's life and actions. All published sermons were preceded by some information on the author and in some cases on the person they had been dedicated to.⁴⁴ The book *Espejo divino* by friar Juan de Mijangos and the sermons of the Jesuit Juan Martínez de la Parra, from the seventeenth century, were classics for any time.⁴⁵ One of the most popular books of sermons of the eighteenth century, especially for priests who dealt with Nahuas, was the *Promptuario manual mexicano* of the Jesuit Ignacio de Paredes, published in Mexico City in 1759.⁴⁶ It had lessons in Nahuatl for every week and a sermon on Our Lady of Guadalupe for the 12th December.

In addition to sermons, some general *pláticas* (speeches) were given before the administration of the sacraments to explain their significance. An example of what the priest could say to the Indians before confession was provided by friar Francisco de Ávila: "Amados hijos míos por lo mucho que os amo siento que se condenen vuestras almas para confesarse mal, y así os ruego que antes de confesaros hagáis entero examen de vuestras culpas, y esto se hace bien entrándose en un rincón de la casa y comenzando por el primer Mandamiento de la ley de Dios hasta el ultimo de la Iglesia."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The general analysis of sermons is based on some published sermons of the eighteenth century found in the Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico City, in the special collection LAFRAGUA, and on some comments in Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 156, 160-1, and in Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación*, pp. 222-9. The sermons are also listed in the catalogue edited by Leyva Edelmira Ramírez, *Cartas pastorales, elogios fúnebres, oraciones, panegíricos, sermones y otros géneros de oratoria sagrada de la colección Lafragua del Fondo Reservado de la Biblioteca Nacional de México* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1992).

⁴⁵ Juan de Mijangos, *Espejo Divino en lengua mexicana en que pueden verse los Padres y tomar documento para acertar a doctrinar bien a sus hijos*, 1607, reproduced from the original in the Biblioteca Nacional de España in the CD ROM *Obras Clásicas sobre la Lengua Náhuatl, Colección Clásicos Tavera, Serie IX, Fuentes lingüísticas indígenas* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1998); Juan Martínez de la Parra, *Luz de verdades católicas y explicación de la doctrina cristiana* (Paris: Librería de Rosa, 1848).

⁴⁶ British Library Manuscripts (from here on BL MSS) 4499.cc.14, Ignacio de Paredes, *Promptuario manual mexicano*, 1759. See also Juan de Grijalva, *Crónica de la orden de N.P.S. Agustín en las provincias de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1985), p. 166.

⁴⁷ Francisco de Ávila, *Arte de la lengua mexicana, y breves pláticas de los misterios de Nuestra Santa Fee Catholica*, 1717, reproduced from the original in the Biblioteca Nacional de España in the CD ROM *Obras Clásicas*, pp. 29-34.

Through an analysis of sermons dedicated to the Virgin Mary it is possible to identify some of the characteristics of a Christian woman the Church deemed essential. First of all, the Virgin was an example of how to follow the law of the Church; she accepted and applied the rules without questioning them, simply thinking that it was the right thing to do, “porque sujetarse a la ley es humildad heroica.”⁴⁸ Humility was an important trait of her personality, together with purity and charity. Moreover, through her life the Virgin Mary had shown what was deemed essential in female daily activities. Laziness was a serious sin, a woman had to work hard in her duties during the day, caring for her family through cooking, spinning and weaving. Then, at night she had to pray and worship God. Participation in mass, sacraments and mortification through fasting were considered very important, as well as the virtues of patience and perseverance, and also a sense of compassion for people, since she had to be “suave para todas, y estricta para sí.”⁴⁹ Modesty was expected in the way she dressed and behaved, “un vestido talar de fortaleza y valor era el único adorno.” In addition, young women were warned to study Christian doctrine, rather than to waste their time on futile activities, “que saben de baile, [...] de lo que no deberían saber: aprenderán pues, [...] lo que deben saber, que es Cristo.”⁵⁰ Through these examples, the Church defined what was deemed to be the correct form of daily life for a woman. It took place inside the house, with domestic activities and child rearing, “siendo los hijos, la familia, la casa una ilustre finca de honor y gloria.”⁵¹

Sermons were not the only means that the Church used to transmit Christian doctrine; another powerful instrument were catechism books, which contained and explained the major points of doctrine. Apart from some particular language expressions, the contents of catechisms did not change during the colonial period. During the eighteenth century the most used catechism in Spanish was that of the Jesuit Gerónimo de Ripalda, which was translated into Nahuatl by another Jesuit, Ignacio de Paredes in

⁴⁸ Biblioteca Nacional Mexico City (from here on BNM), LAFRAGUA (from here on LAF), Sermon R. 1336, “Oración evangélica, y panegyrica de la Purificación de Maria Ssma.”, 1703, p. 20.

⁴⁹ BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1117, “Piedra fundamental de la mystica Sion”, 1727, p. 12. The sermon lists all the virtues of a Christian woman.

⁵⁰ BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1184, “María Santissima”, 1755, pp. 17, 21-22.

⁵¹ BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1185, “La Muger edificativa”, 1755, p. 3. This sermon also lists the virtues a woman should have, stressing the fact that, in order to build a good home and family, she had to discipline her body and soul first.

his *Catecismo mexicano* (1758).⁵² This was the most widely used catechism among Indians of central Mexico. Parish priests of indigenous communities referred to it any time they needed to explain some Christian concept, finding useful translations of the doctrine that helped them when they did not have a proper knowledge of Nahuatl. The *Catecismo mexicano* opened with an explanation of God's Ten Commandments and the Church's Five Commandments, then it followed with a description of the seven sacraments, mortal sins and virtues. It also included a description and translation of basic prayers such as the Lord's prayer, the Holy Mary, the Salve Regina, and the Creed. At the end there was a section which gave an account of those indispensable acts and forms of behaviour that a good Christian had to carry out every day. As soon as a person woke up, the day would start with kneeling and praying to God, then he or she had to go to church for the morning mass and listen carefully to the sermon when it was preached. After that, a person had to carry out conscientiously his or her daily activities, avoiding laziness and vices, and being honest and kind with everybody. At night, before going to bed, it was recommended he or she kneel and thank God for the day, examining all actions to find out how and when they had sinned and ask for forgiveness, while praying to the Virgin Mary. These were general recommendations made to all Christians and particularly to all Indians, but it is significant that they recall many of the characteristics underlined in the analysis of the model of life illustrated by the Virgin Mary.

Besides catechisms, other indispensable instruments used by the clergy to acculturate the Indians were confessionals. These contained the questions a priest had to ask, the kind of answers he might expect and the way that the sinner should show repentance. The friars begun to confess Indians as early as the 1530s with bilingual books in Spanish and Nahuatl. The best-known confessional was that by friar Alonso de Molina, published first in 1565, but many more were published during the colonial period; in addition all catechisms had a section dedicated to the way of confessing

⁵² BL MSS 3505.aa.82, Ignacio de Paredes, *Catecismo mexicano*, 1758; BL MSS 3504.f.12, Gerónimo de Ripalda, *Catecismo y exposición breve de la doctrina cristiana*, 1783. On these two catechisms see Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *La educación popular de los Jesuitas* (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1989), pp. 52-54. Another catechism that has been used for reference is: BL MSS 4499.cc.14, Ignacio de Paredes, *Promptuario*. On the contents of catechisms during the colonial period see: Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Nueva colección*, p. 34; Taylor, *Magistrates*, p. 239.

indigenous people.⁵³ As already pointed out in Chapter One, confession was, to the extent that it was actually implemented, the most effective expression of pastoral power that the Church used to submit the Indians to its control. This was achieved through the two essential features of confession itself: the reconstruction of the past, searching for sins, and the discourse of interrogation made by the priest. Every admission of guilt was an implicit recognition of the Church authority, as well as a way through which the Church could bring the native culture into the realm of Catholicism and judge it. Moreover, the fact that admission must be carried out in front of a representative of the religious authority in order to be valid is itself an evidence of the power relationship embodied in the sacrament.⁵⁴

The discourse of interrogation can be analysed through two texts of the eighteenth century: friar Manuel Pérez's *Farol indiano* and friar Marcos de Saavedra's *Confessionario*. Through an analysis of the questions these confessionals contained, it appears that special emphasis was placed on the sixth and ninth commandments, which related to sex and adultery.⁵⁵ Many more questions and explanations are provided than for any other commandments, revealing the intention of overpowering the penitent and discovering his/her most intimate acts and desires. In this way, the confessor could define and appropriate the penitent's sins, hoping to submit him or her to his power.⁵⁶ It is well known that the Church paid special attention to sins against morality linked to sexual behaviour. In this, it seems that the woman had a specific role: she was the object of desire and at the same time the stimulus of transgression. In fact, the questions related to sexual sins were mostly directed at men, while women were seen as acting as a stimulus of male sexual behaviour. While some attention was given to women as active subjects, questions were usually formulated in terms such as: "Algunas veces has empujado a tu marido, negándole el debido? Algunas veces te has

⁵³ Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Historia de la educación*, pp. 216-20. An analysis of some commandments the Indians had to respect is found also in the catechisms, as in BL MSS 3504.f.12, Ripalda, *Catecismo*, pp. 153-7.

⁵⁴ Rafael, *Contracting*, pp. 103-4; Foucault, *History*, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁵ The books considered here are: Manuel Pérez, *Farol indiano y guía de curas de indios*, 1713, and Marcos de Saavedra, *Confessionario breve activo y pasivo en lengua mexicana*, 1746, both reproduced from the originals at the Biblioteca Nacional de España in the CD ROM *Obras Clásicas*. For the two commandments: "El sexto, no fornicarás. [...] El noveno, no desearás la muger de tu próximo", see BL MSS 3504.f.12, Ripalda, *Catecismo*, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁶ Rafael, *Contracting*, p. 106.

aderezado, con intención de que los hombres te deseen?”⁵⁷ Clearly these questions were based on the traditional and stereotyped image of the woman introduced in the previous section. Moreover, the prudence of the confessor was essential: he was only to mention to a married woman the possibility that she had betrayed her husband, and if she denied it, it was recommended that he not pursue the matter: “si no lo ha hecho, no le abro los ojos.”⁵⁸ This approach combines perfectly with the conception of women as fragile and irrational creatures.

The perseverance in examining sexual behaviour created a relationship between the confessor and the indigenous woman in which the former took for himself the role of controlling and judging over very intimate matters. As a consequence, native women were often discouraged from confessing.⁵⁹ This reaction may be related to the more general difficulty that Indians found in accepting the process of individualisation that confession implied. The dynamic of the sacrament made the penitent come out of the group to face the confessor alone, where she or he recreated the most intimate experiences and desires that could be explicitly attributed to her or him. This individualistic perception of the self was typical of Western societies but totally new to the Indians of New Spain.⁶⁰ Another impediment to confession was the language, since often the priest and the penitent had problems in understanding each other. This was especially true with rural indigenous women, who hardly knew any Spanish. As a consequence, gestures and posture played a vital role during confession, since they enabled a priest to establish whether there was true contrition. Contrition meant repentance and pain for one's sins because they caused suffering to God. Confessing for the fear of going to hell was not enough; no pardon would be given without true repentance for betraying God. Contrition could be conveyed through the expression of the face, the look, the posture of the hands, but the most direct way was through weeping.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Pérez, *Farol indiano*, p. 185. On the issue of sexual behaviour, see also Gruzinski, “Individualization”, pp. 101-4.

⁵⁸ Pérez, *Farol indiano*, pp. 19-20. On the same, see Saavedra, *Confessionario*, pp. 3-5, 10-11.

⁵⁹ Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “Tradición y ruptura”, p. 55. Deeds, “Double Jeopardy”, p. 261.

⁶⁰ Gruzinski, “Individualization”, pp. 101-2; Foucault, *History*, pp. 60-62.

⁶¹ BL MSS 3504.f.12, Ripalda, *Catecismo*, pp. 153-7; Osvaldo F. Pardo, “Bárbaros y mudos: comunicación verbal y gestual en la confesión de los nahuas”, *Colonial Latin American Review* 5(1) (June 1996), pp. 33-39.

The difficulties and the problematic assimilation of the conceptual framework of Christianity deeply influenced confessional practice in the indigenous society. The sacrament was largely observed in the first years after the Conquest, as is evident in the words of an Augustinian friar, who affirmed that once the confessor took a boat and the Indians followed him with their canoes “y esto con tanto afecto y devoción que sucedía muchas veces que echándose al agua y nadando hasta el bordo de la canoa en que iba el ministro, allí se confesaban.”⁶² But soon it appeared that under a superficial conformity lay native incomprehension of many intrinsic aspects of confession. On one hand, the Indians did not adopt concepts with which they were not familiar at all in their world, for instance the categories of sin or the dichotomy body/soul. On the other hand, the clergy attributed the problems not to cultural distance but rather to the inferiority and childishness of the natives. As the scholar Inga Clendinnen has noted, confession was often the product of confusion between people who did not understand each other and who found “it easier to make of them familiar monsters than to acknowledge them to be different.”⁶³

The Model of a Christian Life Applied to the Indigenous World

Sermons, catechisms and confessionals helped the parish priest to carry out one of his major duties, the teaching and explanation of the Christian doctrine, through which the models of a Christian life, and especially of a Christian woman were applied to the indigenous communities. According to the dispositions of the Council of Trent, classes in doctrine had to be held every Sunday and feast days after mass, both in Spanish and Nahuatl, or in other indigenous languages, according to the communities. Moreover, during Lent and Advent doctrine was to be explained daily, or at least three times per week.⁶⁴ *Visitas* (tours of inspection) by archbishops José Lanciego y Eguilaz and Manuel Rubio y Salinas in the first half of the eighteenth century constantly

⁶² Grijalva, *Crónica*, p. 105.

⁶³ Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests. Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 188. See also Gruzinski, “Individualization”, pp. 104-5; and Pérez, *Farol indiano*, pp. 16, 25.

⁶⁴ Taylor, *Magistrates*, p. 152.

underlined the importance of explaining the Christian doctrine and insisted on the necessity to test the natives' knowledge, as they actually did in the pueblos they visited. In fact, according to the dispositions of the Third Mexican Provincial Council, ecclesiastical inspections had the aim of promoting true Christian doctrine, extirpating idolatry and correcting mistakes.⁶⁵ The two Archbishops distinguished themselves for their zeal in spreading the doctrine and giving a good example to all the Indians. This is evident through the numerous tours of inspection they realised, which are examined in detail further on in this section, and through the pastoral letters and edicts they issued on the importance of explaining the doctrine.⁶⁶ They stressed that a key moment for doing this was before celebrating a wedding, since doctrine was an essential foundation for Christian marriage. Marriage was the matter on which the two Archbishops insisted most during their *visitas*, sanctioning couples who lived together without the sacrament in order to push them to marry; also, they gave dispensation to legalise unions between relatives, which was very common among the natives. Many times they intervened to support an indigenous woman's petition for her husband to leave his lover, showing consideration for the problems of native wives. In general, the Archbishops revealed a positive attitude toward the claims presented by native women during their inspections and most of their deliberations aimed to help them when they were victims of abuse.⁶⁷

What emerges from the reports of the *visitas* is the portrait of two major heads of the Mexican Church trying to support and protect native women. This image may be considered to be contrary to the conception of the native woman as the major cause of sin mentioned above. In fact, the two images are not in contradiction, rather they reflect the ambiguous conception the colonial Church had of women. On one hand, a native woman was demonised due to her weakness and temperament, which made her prone to sin and the temptation of the Devil. On the other hand, her difficult life at the

⁶⁵ Galvan Rivera (ed.), *Concilio III Provincial Mexicano*, Libro Quinto, Título I, pp. 359-64.

⁶⁶ References to the importance of doctrine are scattered around in the *libros de visita* the two Archbishops ordered to write during their journeys around the diocese of Mexico: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/2bis 1715-16, L10A/3 1715-21, L10A/4 1717; AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita* L10A/6 1754-58, L10A/7 1756-57, L10A/8 1756-60.

⁶⁷ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, ff. 114, 178-80, 270, 302; these are only some examples, the book being full of references to cases in which the Archbishop intervened to defend

side of violent and often drunk men was recognised. She worked hard all day, and sometimes her husband denied her the minimum she needed for her support: “Ellos ordinariamente no solo no les dan, pero les quitan para la embriaguez cuanto ellas ganan.”⁶⁸ Or a man impeded his wife in following the prescriptions of the Church. For instance, the Church encouraged couples to abstain from sexual relations the day before Holy Communion, but many times native women confessed that this was impossible because their husbands suspected their resistance was due to the fact that they had a lover, and they feared to be beaten for that. Following the Church’s advice, many native women also wanted to confess once ill or about to give birth, since their lives might be in danger. However, carrying out a proper confession seemed to be impossible because their husbands did not leave them alone with the priest, and “como podría confesarse la que tenía tan cercano el riesgo de un marido ignóránte, malicioso, y cruel, como son todos ellos?”⁶⁹

Even though the Church focused on the troubled position of the native woman in a paternalistic way, it is important to note its concern, and in some cases the two Archbishops even acknowledged the value of some traditional roles native women played. Such was the case with the *parteras*, or midwives, who existed in indigenous communities long before the Spanish arrived. In colonial times they continued to help childbirth using traditional practices, but the archbishops Lanciego y Eguilaz and Rubio y Salinas recommended that they should also be instructed in the sacrament of baptism, so that they could practise it if it happened that there was no priest and the baby was in danger.⁷⁰

The two Archbishops have been privileged in the present analysis due to the amount of information they provided on Indian life, particularly through the reports of inspection tours they left, while the other Archbishop of the period, Vizarrón y Eguiarreta did not carry out any inspection at all. For that reason, it is important to dedicate some

Christian marriage. AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/8, no folio number. On marriage and doctrine see also: Pérez, *Farol indiano*, pp. 130-1, 149; Saavedra, *Confessionario*, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁸ Pérez, *Farol indiano*, p. 43.

⁶⁹ Pérez, *Farol indiano*, p. 74; also pp. 41-42.

⁷⁰ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/8, f.13; AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, f. 124.

attention to their lives and the *visitas* that they accomplished. Both of them were peninsular Spaniards, as was the case with so many high dignitaries appointed in the New World. Lanciego y Eguilaz was born in 1655 and was appointed to the archbishopric of Mexico when he was 56 years old, after long experience as a Benedictine, which inevitably moulded his life, since poverty and humility were his major characteristics, at least according to the sermons that were preached in his memory. Moreover, he strongly believed in the necessity of guiding the natives to their salvation through providing a good example and teaching them sacraments and doctrine. For that reason, he travelled almost every year to some of the pueblos of his archdiocese and supported the foundation of schools in Spanish for the Indians. He was convinced that patience and understanding were needed so that “se tratasen a los indios sus hijos, como les decía, con amor y no como a bestias.”⁷¹

Manuel Rubio y Salinas had a similar approach, and was even more insistent on some matters than Lanciego y Eguilaz. Despite the fact that he was born of a very wealthy family, he led a simple life and was a committed priest. He was appointed archbishop in 1748, when he was only 45 and he showed his dedication to the ideals of the good example and the instruction of the natives by going out on *visita* at least once a year in the period of his mandate. Not only did he insist on the necessity of creating and supporting schools in Spanish for the Indians and explaining the sacraments to them, but he also exhorted the clergy to treat them with love and tenderness. Physical punishment was not excluded, but it had to be used with much care, for the Indians needed charity first of all. He was also the first archbishop to issue many pastoral letters and edicts on the behaviour of the clergy, reprimanding those who did not respect their obligations and giving advice on how to conduct themselves and apply God's law among the natives. Such concern was uncommon among archbishops, who normally limited themselves to some general comments. Rubio y Salinas, on the other hand, tackled the abuses of the clergy and tried to correct them.⁷² Thus the two Archbishops were inspired by similar ideals and carried out similar actions.

⁷¹ Sosa, *Episcopado*, pp. 70-78, quotation on p. 77; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1194, “Sermón funeral”, 1728; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1217, “Sentida, funebre presentación”, 1728.

⁷² Sosa, *Episcopado*, pp. 79-94; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1283, “Elogio funebre”, 1765; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1224, “Sermón funebre”, 1765.

Archbishop Lanciego y Eguilaz travelled almost every year between 1715 and 1721, covering the whole territory of the archbishopric of Mexico. Of particular importance to the present research is the report he left on his inspection to the Toluca Valley in 1717. Rubio y Salinas also covered the whole area, carrying out his *visitas* between 1754 and 1759, but the information on the Toluca Valley only relates to 1758 (for eighteenth-century maps of the area and of some of the pueblos, see Figures 2 to 5). Every archbishop was supposed to carry out at least one *visita* during his mandate according to the Council of Trent, but this practice was often neglected because of the difficulties of the journey. The scope of the inspections is summarised in the words of Lanciego y Eguilaz: “El principal asunto de nuestra visita es explorar en los fieles el conocimiento de los principales misterios de Nuestra Santa Fe” and also “pacificar, serenar, y aquietar los rumores e inquietudes en que zozobraban y de que resultaban perniciosas consecuencias dignas de llorar con lagrimas de sangre.”⁷³ The Archbishop wanted to check personally the results of the evangelisation among the natives. At the same time he wanted to demonstrate to his flock that he was there to listen to their problems and reassure them in their worries, like a shepherd who could show them the way to redemption. The same intention is clearly stated by Rubio y Salinas:

“Poniendo en ejecución los eficaces deseos con que vivimos de reconocer por lo mismo el estado de las almas, que están a nuestro cargo para providenciar como Padre lo más conducente a su salud espiritual, aplicándoles desde cerca, y nuestra misma mano los remedios, y fomentos que hubiesen menester, o bien para restituir al camino divino a las que de el se hubiesen desviado o para alentar a las que estuviesen puestas en el aquello sigan con nuevo y mayor vigor y alegría, y asimismo para establecer, y determinar lo mas oportuno, a la conservación de la disciplina eclesiástica, restitución de las buenas costumbres y destierro de las malas, y en fin para hacernos cargo del estado de las iglesias y de los medios que deberemos usar para que se logre con plenitud el efecto de nuestros pastoral anhelos.”⁷⁴

⁷³ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/2bis, f. 11, and L10A/4, f. 164. The periods of *visita* of the two Archbishops have been extracted from their reports: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/2bis, L10A/3, L10A/4; and AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita* L10A/6, L10A/7, L10A/8.

⁷⁴ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita* L10A/7, during the inspection to Otumba, no folio number.

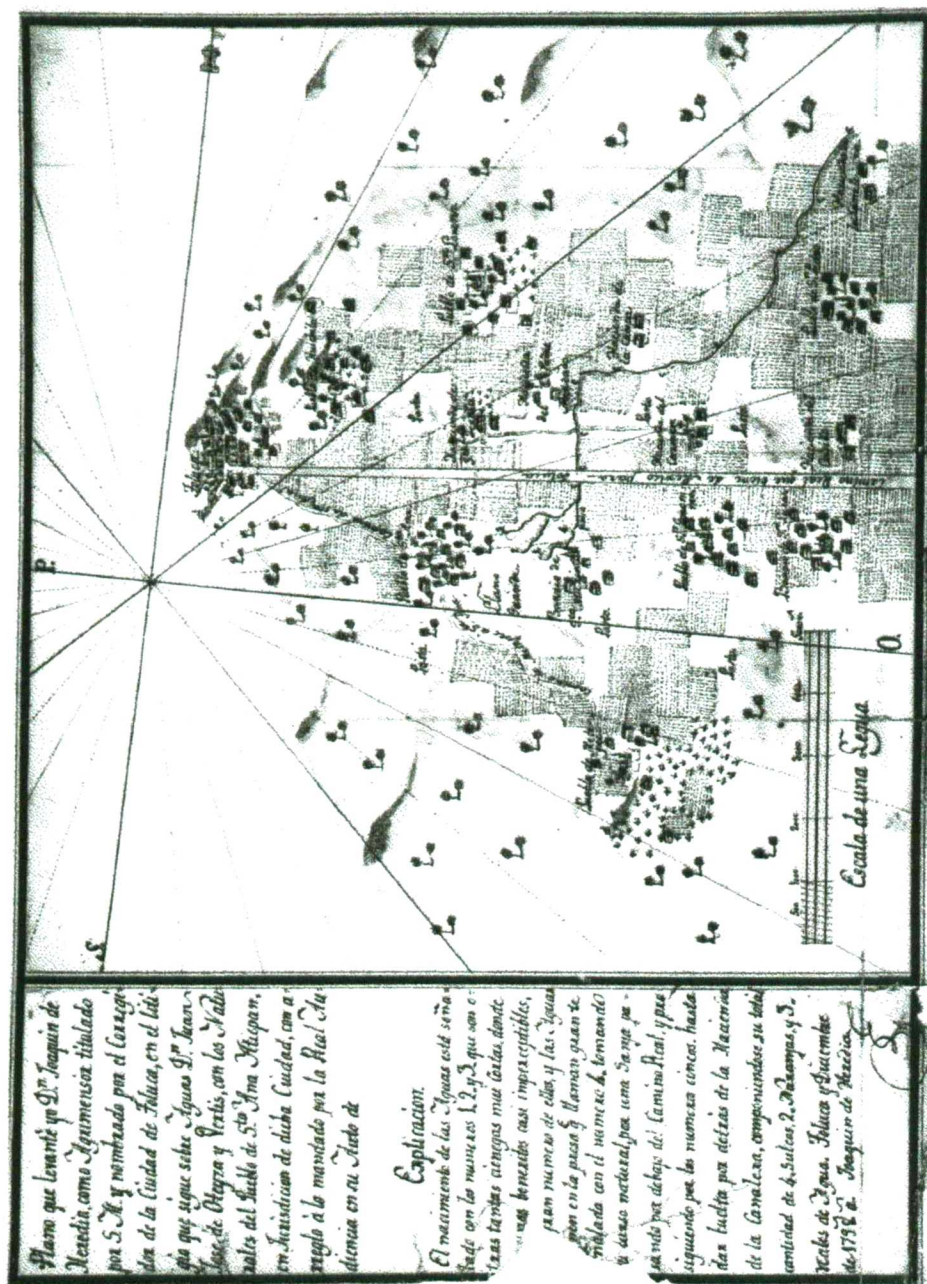


Figure 2: Portion of the Valley of Toluca: Toluca, Huichila, Santa Ana Aticpac, Metepec, San Gerónimo, San Pedro (AGNT 1471, exp 1, cuaderno 3, f190)

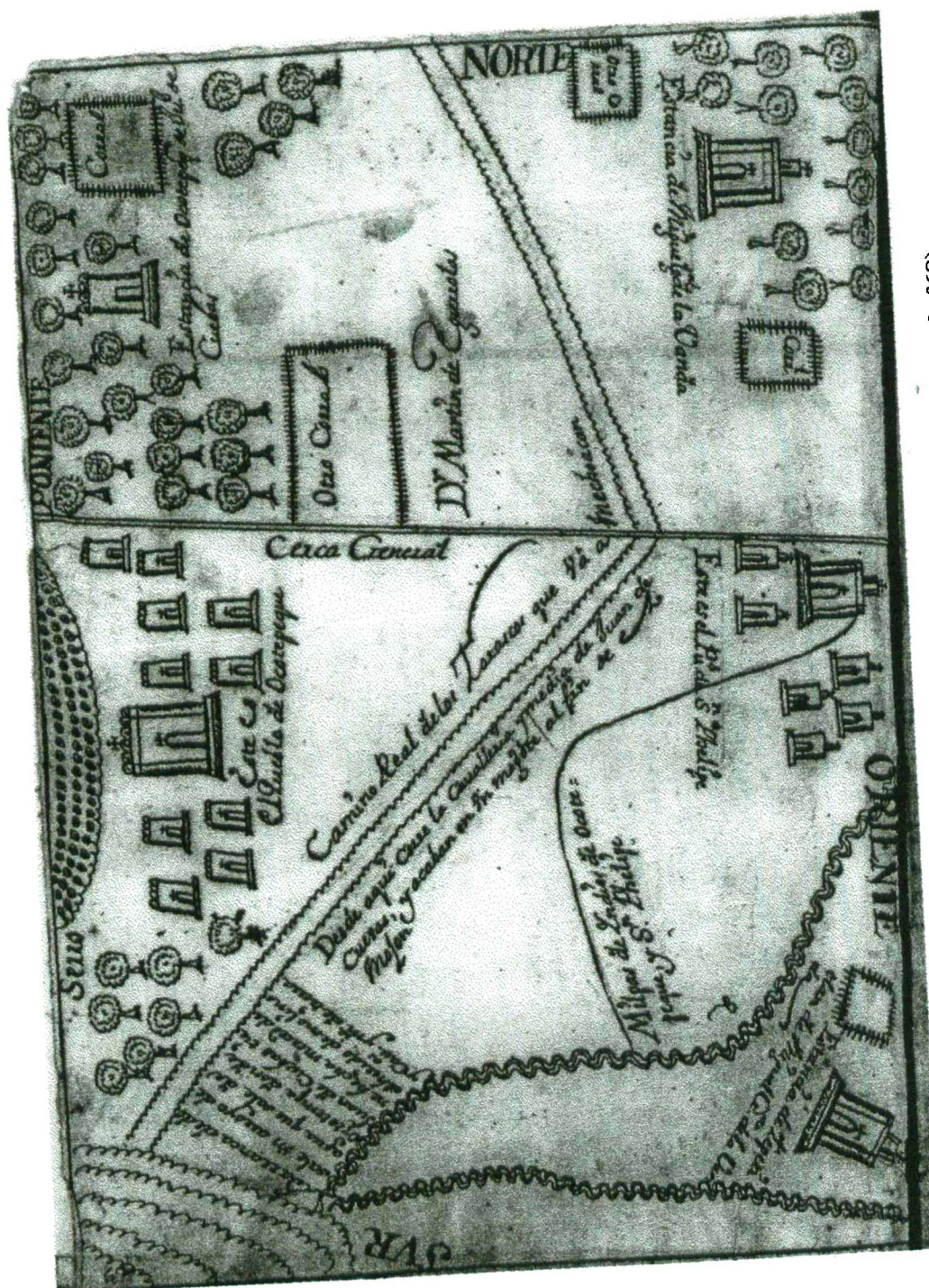


Figure 3: Pueblo of Ocotepec, Ixtlahuaca. (AGNV 17, exp 2, f69)



Figure 4: Zinacatepec (AGNT 2476, exp 1, f260)

Rubio y Salinas also specified that it was the archbishop's duty to verify the state of churches, chapels, hospitals and *cofradías*, as well as to inquire about the behaviour of the flock and of the clergy in order to assure respect for the doctrine. Therefore "para unir en el vínculo de caridad a todos nuestros súbditos, exhortamos, y [...] mandamos a todos, y a cada uno de ellos, que si supiesen, o hubiesen oído decir de cualquier pecados públicos, lo vengan a manifestar."⁷⁵ Thus public sins had to be reported to the archbishop so that he could intervene. By public sins the Church meant all those behaviours and acts that openly contradicted the doctrine and caused scandal.

Before going out for a tour of inspection, the archbishop issued a letter advising the selected places of his arrival. Both civil and religious authorities of a pueblo waited for him at the cemetery, outside in the churchyard, to welcome him.⁷⁶ An idea of what the scene looked like can be grasped through the report of the *visita* Lanciego y Eguilaz paid to Tenango del Valle on 1st July 1717:

"[...] recibido con repique de campanas, de Don Manuel, y Don Gregorio Noriega alcalde mayor por su majestad, y teniente de este partido, y su jurisdicción, de los gobernadores alcaldes de república, así de la cabecera, como de los pueblos a ella pertenecientes, fiscales de la iglesia, común, y naturales, y muchos de los circunbensinos españoles con universal júbilo, y regocijo, y a la puerta del cementerio los mayordomos, y oficiales de las *cofradías* con sus insignias, y estandartes, cruz alta, y siriales, revestido con capa el Doctor Don Andrés Moreno Bala cura beneficiado por su majestad vicario, y juez eclesiástico de este dicho pueblo de diácono y subdiacono los Bachilleres Don Juan de Pareja, y Don Juan de Bensis: habiendo su Señoría Illma recibido el agua bendita de mano de dicho cura y hecho la adoración e incensación de la santísima cruz prevenida en un altar, fue llevado en procesión [verso] bajo de palio con todo el acompañamiento, cantando el Te Deum Laudamus hasta el altar mayor [...]."⁷⁷

This was the normal practice in all the pueblos visited by the archbishop: it was a moment of display of local elite's authority and of joy and celebration for the parishioners. An account of an inspection to Texcaltitlan, close to Zinacantepec, a

⁷⁵ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita* L10A/8, during the inspection to Chalco, no folio number.

⁷⁶ Again, the description of how an inspection was carried out comes from an analysis of the six *Libros de visita* of the two Archbishops.

⁷⁷ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 329.

small indigenous settlement, described how: “Fue recibido por todos los naturales con mucho contento y regocijo, ruido de música y campanas”.⁷⁸

After that, the *visita* accomplished other tasks, such as checking the order of the church and sacristy and the inventory of the properties. Then there usually was the inspection of the *cofradías*’ records and the renewal of the priests’ licence to preach and confess, together with the examination of the status of parish books and the census of the population. Moreover, the archbishop administered the sacrament of confirmation and questioned the parishioners, especially children about their knowledge of the doctrine, distributing rosaries as reward and charity to the poor: “Mandó juntar a los indisuelos y muchachas a quienes hizo preguntar la doctrina cristiana y oraciones principales en su idioma premiando a los que respondían con rosarios que se les repartían; mando asimismo dar limosna a los pobres que ocurrieron.”⁷⁹

After a couple of days at the most, the archbishop moved on to another village, not before giving a final speech exhorting the parishioners to improve their faith: “Después predico su Ilma despidiéndose tierna y amorosamente de el pueblo exhortandolo a el amor santo de Dios, guarda de su divina ley y preceptos, a la unión y fraternidad con que deben amarse, y a el respecto amor y reverencia con que deben estimar a el párroco obedeciendo sus preceptos.”⁸⁰ The *visitas* by archbishop Lanciego y Eguilaz were exhausting since normally he started very early in the morning, between four and six o’clock, with the mass and then continued all day between administering the sacraments, conducting inspections, and meeting with the flock. In addition, the conditions of the journey were more often than not difficult since he had to face very long distances and difficult roads in order to reach the scattered pueblos. According to his secretary, by the end of the inspection of 1717 the Archbishop was

⁷⁸ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 230.

⁷⁹ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 182.

⁸⁰ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 307. Similar recommendations were made by Rubio y Salinas: AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita* L10A/6, after the inspection to Tultitlan, no folio number.

worn out and had to rest eleven days at the sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios outside Mexico City before reaching his residence in the city.⁸¹

As mentioned above, at the beginning of their *visitas* José Lanciego y Eguilaz and Manuel Rubio y Salinas always declared they were stimulated by the need to verify their flock's conversion and the application of Christian doctrine. They spoke to the parish clergy and to the parishioners, collecting information on numerous abuses "con gran dolor de nuestro corazón". They concluded that the Indians' disdain of the doctrine was the result of indigenous ignorance as well as due to negligence by the clergy.⁸² The role of the archbishop remained above the parties, with the dual function of father for the natives and model to follow for the clergy, as will be explained later on.

Conceiving the natives as primitive was an essential part of the two Archbishops' paternalistic approach. The most common words that they used to refer to the Indians were misery and need, they were "los más infelices y desdichados."⁸³ Moreover, the natives were irrational and barbarous, and almost always drunk. In fact, the Archbishops stressed many times the abuse of traditional beverages such as pulque and *tepache*, the latter being particularly common in the Valley of Toluca, as explained in Chapter Five. Drinking, traditional celebrations and work distracted the natives to the point that they disregarded the teaching of the Christian doctrine and the worship of God.⁸⁴ Both Lanciego y Eguilaz and Rubio y Salinas insisted on the image of the Indians as unfortunate and needy in order to promote what they considered the right approach to them. Acting as fathers and good shepherds to the natives, they aimed to inspire a similar attitude in the clergy. Rubio y Salinas looked at the Indians as "nuestros amados hijos en el Señor", who had to be treated with love, tenderness and charity even when they required punishment, "de modo que conozcan, y se

⁸¹ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 406.

⁸² AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/2bis, ff. 11-12; AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/7, 20th November 1756, no folio number; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1194, "Sermón funeral", 1728, for José Lanciego y Eguilaz.

⁸³ BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1283, "Elogio funebre", 1765, for Manuel Rubio y Salinas, p. 143. See also BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1224, "Sermon funebre", 1765, for Manuel Rubio y Salinas, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁴ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/8, ff. 157-8.

persuadan, que se aborrece y azota en ellos el vicio, y no la Nación. En una palabra, usase muchas veces de la suavidad, y del amor, y pocas del azote.”⁸⁵ Corporal punishment was not dismissed, but it had to be used with caution; when applying the law in no case should a priest act as a judge but always as a father, using compassion. Indeed, it is worth noting that the Archbishops never used the word *rigor* when they referred to the method of correcting the Indians, while they often used it when mentioning the abuses made by the local clergy and the need to punish them.⁸⁶

The image of the priest as a father and shepherd was constantly present in the Archbishops’ discourse, as well as in expressions such as “amor paternal” and “paternal corrección”. The father-child like relationship was continuously remarked upon as the right approach with the natives, who played the role of children in need of their father’s guidance and affection. This appears clearly in the words of Lanciego y Eguilaz: “[...] los deseos que traía de dejarlos a todos desengañados del amor paternal con que los amaba y deseaba sus consuelos, de los cuales proveería con los que se hallasen lastimados, quejosos, y desconsolados, si ocurriesen, como se lo mandaba, a su presencia, prometiéndoles no negarse a alguno, chico, ni grande, pobre, ni abatido [...]”.⁸⁷ The vision of a compassionate father, ready to console and relieve his children from the burden of everyday problems curiously recalls the image and the function of the Virgin Mary examined before.

During the *visitas* the Archbishops assured the Indians that they would listen to everybody who was in pain and sought their help, at any time and place, and they were always at their flock’s disposal and left “siempre abiertas las puertas de su corazón y morada.”⁸⁸ As reported by their secretaries, they expressed their paternal love through visiting hospitals, where they spent time with the sick and gave charity. Moreover,

⁸⁵ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1007, “Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762”, pp. 5, 21-22; see also AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/7, with reference to Otumba, no folio number.

⁸⁶ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, f. 164; for the use of the word *rigor*, see the pastoral letters of Rubio y Salinas: BNM LAF, Pastoral Letter R. 1000, “Carta pastoral de 10 de junio de 1756”, p. 2, BNM LAF, Pastoral Letter R. 1007, “Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762”, p. 22.

⁸⁷ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 196v.

⁸⁸ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4, f. 164 for the quotation, and ff. 184, 255 for the visits to hospitals and jails.

Lanciego y Eguilaz was reported to have paid a visit to the jail in Toluca, where he arranged to pay off the debts of those who had been imprisoned for debt and obtained freedom for some others from the corregidor. Therefore the father-shepherd image was reflected in some concrete aspects of their behaviour.

Another important task for the two Archbishops was to bring about the natives' conversion and acculturation through teaching Christian doctrine and Spanish.⁸⁹ The doctrine should be explained by the parish priest to all the inhabitants of a pueblo every Sunday, both in Spanish and in the local indigenous language. In addition, as explained above, sermons and *pláticas* during the mass or before the administration of the sacraments helped in Christian instruction. These methods were to be applied in each pueblo, but children were to be taught separately and in a different way. Hence Rubio y Salinas wrote:

“Mandamos, que en lo futuro todos, y cada uno de los Curas de nuestra Diocesi, en cada uno de los Domingos, y fiestas solemnes del año, a la hora de la tarde, que pareciere mas proporcionada para el efecto, hagan tocar la Campana, para que acudan a la Iglesia los Niños y Niñas de su Parroquia, y estando en ella con separación, les enseñen, y expliquen por si mismos [...] la Doctrina Cristiana, proporcionándose a su edad, capacidad, e Idioma.”⁹⁰

In addition to doctrine, a school was to be organised for children to learn prayers and doctrine in Spanish, and the parish priest was held responsible for its good functioning. In the school males and females from four to ten years old were to attend on a daily basis and were to be taught separately. Ideally the teachers were to be Spanish, but due to the difficulty of finding them, most schools had only one teacher, usually a male, and of native origin.⁹¹ The teacher was to be a native instructed in the Catholic faith who had to explain it in Spanish under strict supervision of the local clergy. In fact, the parish priest had to participate in classes every Saturday to check the teacher's behaviour and to examine the children on a regular basis. The community

⁸⁹ On the schools in Spanish for native communities see: BNM LAF, Pastoral letter, R. 1007, “Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762”, pp. 14-16; AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, f. 14; and AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/6, 4th December 1757, no folio number.

⁹⁰ BNM LAF, Pastoral Letter R. 1007, “Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762”, p. 14.

⁹¹ Some similar information on the schoolmasters is reported by Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 334-7.

where a school was organised had to pay the teacher's salary out of the *caja de comunidad*. There was also a person, the *fiscal* or *topile*, who was in charge of gathering the children before classes and of denouncing and punishing those parents who did not allow their children to attend the school.

Another aspect of conversion and acculturation the Archbishops insisted on was the practice of sacraments, especially confirmation and marriage. In each pueblo touched by their *visitas*, they confirmed large numbers of people, as the data of Lanciego y Eguilaz's inspection of 1717 in Table 2 indicates. However, they often showed more attention to the practical aspects of the celebration than to the Indians' true understanding of the sacrament: "les mandamos traigan limpias las frentes y cercenado el pelo para recibir el santo crisma con la decencia, respecto y veneración que se debe."⁹²

As for marriage, the Archbishops insisted on the importance of the Christian sacrament to legitimate a couple in God's eyes. Marriage was so essential that in all cases in which a native couple decided not to marry because of their poverty and the consequent impossibility to pay the fees, the Archbishops were ready to absolve them from the payment.⁹³ In their opinion, the sacrament was more important than the possibility of collecting money through it, but the next section will show how this was perceived in a different way by the local clergy. Moreover, the two Archbishops, and especially Rubio y Salinas, conceded *dispensaciones* for those couples who were relatives up to a certain degree, so that they could marry.⁹⁴

In some cases the Archbishops even intervened to protect the natives, especially indigenous women, from specific accusations, as Rubio y Salinas did in 1754, by trying to defend the Indians from the charges of witchcraft.⁹⁵ Commonly gossip or internal problems in the community generated an accusation of witchcraft against a

⁹² AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, f. 2. References to the celebration of confirmation are scattered throughout the records of *visitas* of the two Archbishops.

⁹³ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, ff. 16, 302.

⁹⁴ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/6 and L10A/7.

⁹⁵ AHAM, Box 1754, "El arzobispo Manuel José Rubio y Salinas informa sobre el copioso numero de causas seguidas contra los indios".

member, which was often summarily taken as true by the local clergy, as we shall briefly see in Chapter Five. Rubio y Salinas underlined how prudence was necessary before initiating legal action in the matter in order to avoid abuses and manipulation. He ordered that in no case should a person be arrested only on the basis of the victim's accusation. A doctor should verify what the victim was suffering from, and in his absence this should be done by an ecclesiastical judge, who should obtain information through the family. After that, witnesses had to be called and the whole process should be carried out in secret and with discretion. If witchcraft was proved, the chief judge of the ecclesiastical court for Indians in Mexico City, the *provisor general de naturales*, was required to impose the imprisonment. Finally, the Archbishop specified that no fees should be collected for the lawsuit from the accused Indian.

As it can be seen from the details above mentioned, Lanciego y Eguilaz and Rubio y Salinas, followed the ideal of "padre y buen pastor".⁹⁶ They took care of the Indians, listening to their complaints and needs, visiting them when sick or in jail. They showed humility and charity in their behaviour, reaching the natives in their often isolated settlements and giving money to the poor and to the hospitals that supported them. In addition, Rubio y Salinas gave proof of great pastoral activism, issuing numerous bans, pastoral letters and communications to discipline the clergy.⁹⁷ One may wonder if the reports were not written to paint a positive image of the Archbishops, but it seems clear that both of them attempted to be an example for their clergy, insisting that the priests in turn set good examples for the natives. Hence the key to converting the Indians was not only preaching, but also practice in everyday life.

⁹⁶ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10/A4, f. 307.

⁹⁷ For Lanciego y Eguilaz, see: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, ff. 228, 255; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1194, "Sermón funeral", 1728; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1217, "Sentida, funebre parentación", 1728. For Rubio y Salinas, see: Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/6, records of 1755, no folio number; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1283, "Elogio funebre", 1765; BNM LAF, Sermon R. 1224, "Sermón funebre", 1765; and AGNCRS, 1765, vol. 6, exp. 1, ff. 1-200, "Testimonio integro del cuaderno de expolios y remate de todos los bienes que quedaron por muerte del doctor don Manuel José Rubio y Salinas, arzobispo de México". The latter is the testament left by Rubio y Salinas at his death, through which it is possible to see the donations he made.

Table 2. Confirmations carried out by José Lanciego y Eguilaz during his *visita* in 1717 in the Toluca Valley

Pueblo and Date of <i>Visita</i>	N° of Confirmations	N° of Inhabitants
<i>Temazcaltzingo – 27/04</i>	1859	4600(*)
<i>Santa María Nativitas Atlacomulco – 01/05</i>	1998	3526(*)
<i>San Felipe y Santiago Ixtlahuaca – 05/05</i>	1382	—
<i>Xocotitlan – 08/05</i>	1363	3438
<i>San Francisco Ixtlahuaca – 11/05</i>	2692	4182
<i>San Juan Bautista Xiquipilco – 14/05</i>	907	2839
<i>San Bartolomé Ozolotepec – 17/05</i>	749	2680
<i>San Mateo Almoloya Tlachichilpa – 20/05</i>	1074	1468
<i>N.S. de la Asunción Malacatepec – 23/05</i>	1894	1897
<i>San Francisco Temazcaltepec – 26/05</i>	2151	3761
<i>San Martín Ozolapan and San Juan Bautista Atetzcapán – 29/05</i>	1141	1807
<i>Real de Minas Temazcaltepec – 31/05</i>	2194	2651
<i>San Pedro Texopilco – 03/06</i>	2761	3688
<i>Real y Minas Zultepec – 06/06</i>	5673	7036(*)
<i>Texcaltitlan – 06/06</i>	62	—
<i>San Miguel Zinacantepec – 10/06</i>	421	3419
<i>N.S. de los Angeles Tecaxic – 13/06</i>	185	634
<i>San José de Toluca – 13/06</i>	3465	15625(*)
<i>San Juan Bautista Metepec – 22/06</i>	1749	3474(*)
<i>San Mateo Atenco (ayuda de Metepec) – 22/06</i>	740	2033(*)
<i>San Pedro y Pablo Calimaya – 28/06</i>	1324	5919(*)
<i>Tenango del Valle – 01/07</i>	2419	3550(*)
<i>San Mateo Texcaliacac – 05/07</i>	1098	1650(*)
<i>N.S. de la Asunción Xalatlaco – 08/07</i>	450	2545(*)
<i>San Bartolomé Capolohuac – 11/07</i>	1237	2190(*)
<i>San Martín Ocoyoacac – 14/07</i>	1118	2633(*)
<i>Santa Clara de Lerma – 17/07</i>	417	578
<i>N.S. de la Asunción Tarasquillo – 17/07</i>	368	2353
<i>Huitzquilucan – 21/07</i>	1154	2874

Data are drawn from the report on the inspection: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/4. The number of inhabitants for each pueblo includes married, single and widowed persons both males and females; moreover, for twelve pueblos also children are mentioned (indicated by an *), while in the other cases it is not clear whether they are included or not in the total of inhabitants.

The Clergy between Idealisation and Practice

According to the Archbishops' vision, the clergy should follow the ideal of a father and shepherd: "Somos por nuestro oficio Padres, Pastores, Médicos".⁹⁸ As fathers they would be in charge of the education of the natives, as shepherds they would be responsible for their flock, and as doctors they had to cure their vices and sins. "No Señores, no se nos han dado estos empleos para dormirnos en el descuido, ni para descansar en el ocio [...]. No se cumple, Señores, con administrar los sacramentos, si no se reprenden los vicios; ni basta reprender lo malo, si no procuramos persuadir lo bueno, caminando delante con el ejemplo."⁹⁹ The same rules that the Archbishops applied to themselves were therefore to govern the code of behaviour of the clergy.

The archbishops had authority over different categories of diocesan parish priests. The *cura beneficiado* and the *cura ad interim* were the most important. The former held the parish as a benefice under the title of *vicario in capite*, or head priest, without a time limit, and he was entitled to the parish income by law or custom. He could also be appointed to the position of ecclesiastical judge, and as a local agent of the Inquisition (*comisario*). Actually, the title of *cura* itself included a formal judicial authority in matters such as premarital investigations, execution of wills, and the prosecution of indigenous idolatry. The *cura ad interim* had the same rights and responsibilities but he was temporary. According to William Taylor this category of clergy made up as much as one third of all pastors in Mexico in the eighteenth century, the rest were *vicarios* and *coadjutores*. *Vicarios* were unbeneficed assistants of the *cura*, who helped him with his pastoral obligations, while the *coadjutores* were another category of assistants, usually versed in indigenous languages, who since they were temporary had more independence from the parish priest than the *vicarios*. Besides the diocesan clergy some parishes were held by the Mendicant Orders but, as already explained in Chapter One, their number continued to decline in the eighteenth century as a result of secularisation. In the Toluca Valley, the Franciscans were

⁹⁸ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1007, "Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762" of Rubio y Salinas, p. 1.

⁹⁹ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1007, "Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762", of Rubio y Salinas, p. 4.

present in the jurisdictions of Metepec and Tenango del Valle until 1754, when their *doctrinas* were secularised, while the parish of San José de Toluca remained Franciscan until 1859.¹⁰⁰

Ideally all secular priests had to contribute an estate or pension for their maintenance, in fact according to the Council of Trent ordination was not possible without that source of income. However, if this rule had been strictly applied, the Church would have had serious problems in carrying out its mission for lack of ministers. In practice, since the Crown was the patron of the Church, it was expected to support the clergy, and it did so by providing an income, the *sínodo*, which was paid out of the tithe or Indian tribute. Yet this support was a drain on the royal finances and in 1718 the *sínodo* was withdrawn from all priests who had alternative sources of income, either private or from parish services. Basically parish priests were left to live on the income of their pastoral service, which developed in different ways. First there was the *ración*, or ration, which was a contribution to the living expenses of the priest made by the congregation. This was paid only by Indians and collected by Indian officials. In addition, the priest usually required *servicios*, services for free, such as gathering wood, grinding maize, cooking and duties in the sacristy. Another source of income were the *primicias*, or first fruits, a tax on agriculture and husbandry that varied according to places and usage, since in some parishes Indians were exempt. Finally there were the *derechos parroquiales*, or parish fees for the administration of baptisms, marriages, burials, and special feasts, which were normally fixed by the archbishopric through a diocesan schedule, the *arancel*. Indians were normally charged less for these services. During the first half of the eighteenth century the *arancel* established in 1637-8 was used, and only in 1767 was a new one introduced by the archbishop Lorenzana. Apart from these sources of incomes, priests usually received payments from *cofradías*, and testamentary endowments for perpetual masses. And last, even if the Crown and the archbishops highly criticised it, many

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 79-83, 158; Gerhard, *Guide*, pp. 176, 272, 331.

priests got involved in trade, mining ventures, money lending and landholding, often earning more from these activities than from the ordinary income.¹⁰¹

Exactions by priests became a source of conflict within the religious hierarchy in the eighteenth century due to the fact that Lanciego y Eguilaz and Rubio y Salinas proposed a model of behaviour that was often disregarded in the everyday practice of a local parish priest. The heads of the Church focused mainly on spirituality and pastoral mission, giving relatively scarce consideration to material questions, such as the collection of fees. Through letters and *visitas*, the two Archbishops aimed to inspire the clergy with the “zelo de la salvación de las almas”, so that they could serve the Indians with love and pity, showing them the way to salvation.¹⁰² They also gave them some advice on proper conduct and duties. First of all, the priest had to reside in his parish, and not leave it for more than two or three days at a time or travel further than six to eight leagues without the permission of the archbishop. One of his principal duties and concerns should be the administration of the sacraments, which included bringing Holy Communion to the sick and going to confess those about to die, thus reaching their flocks in their own houses. Moreover, he was to instruct somebody in each village who could baptise in case of emergency. He had to explain the doctrine every Sunday and on days of celebration and had to organise the school in Spanish for children.¹⁰³ He had to keep the registration of baptisms, marriages and burials in *libros parroquiales*, as the clergy was often reminded during *visitas*. Baptisms had to be recorded indicating the ethnic group and the legitimacy/illegitimacy of the child, together with the names of parents and godfathers. As for marriages and burials, the ethnic group and the date were essential, and for the latter it was important to report whether the deceased had left a will. Moreover, the parish priest also had to present to the visiting archbishop a census of the population, distinguishing between married couples, single persons, and widows and widowers. Finally, he was supposed to

¹⁰¹ On the system of parish finances, see Adriaan C. Van Oss, *Catholic Colonialism. A Parish History of Guatemala, 1524-1821* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 79-108. See also Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 126-46.

¹⁰² AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/2bis, ff. 11-12 and L10A/4, ff. 144v-145.

¹⁰³ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita*, L10A/4, ff. 116-17, 124, 346; AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/6, records of 1757, no folio number, and L10A/8, ff. 1-2, 13; also BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1007, “Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762”, pp. 5, 14-16.

collect the parish fees in fair and fixed amount and not to abuse the natives in their collection.¹⁰⁴

A particular recommendation was the preservation of the priest's moral image in the community. The clergy were thus recommended: "No vistan hábitos indecentes, no salgan con otros que no corresponden a su estado, no vayan a peleas de gallos, se abstengan de tratos y comercios."¹⁰⁵ Commerce was a delicate issue since, as already mentioned, parish priests often participated in trading activities to increase their income. The parish priest had to set a good example and avoid any situation that might compromise his reputation, especially when women were lodged in his house during a lawsuit or a quarrel within a family or group (the *depósito*), as will be described in Chapter Three. When a woman was mistreated by her husband, or was caught living in an informal union, she was separated from her partner and put temporarily in a shelter. Normally, the house of the priest was chosen and the woman remained there until the lawsuit was concluded. This appears to have been a very common practice in small rural settlements, so Rubio y Salinas warned the priests not to cross "la ancha puerta que así se abre a la malicia."¹⁰⁶

The concern shown by the two Archbishops, and particularly by Rubio y Salinas, for the conduct of the clergy was followed if not even amplified in the second half of the eighteenth century by archbishop Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana. In his *edicto cordillera* of 5th September 1766, he stressed the importance of the process of selecting and preparing the clergy, which included classes on morality. "Más vale que el número de ministros de Dios no sea crecido con tal que los que haya sean respetados, amados de los pueblos."¹⁰⁷ Moreover, he focused on a matter that became

¹⁰⁴ The inspections include many references to the need to keep the *libros parroquiales*. See in particular: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L10A/3, under the records for 1715, no folio number, L10A/4, ff. 2, 132; AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/7, no folio number. On the priests' duties, see also Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 160-6.

¹⁰⁵ AHAM, Box 1751(1), "Edicto de Manuel Rubio y Salinas sobre el comportamiento que deben tener los curas".

¹⁰⁶ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1000, "Carta pastoral de 10 de junio de 1756", of Rubio y Salinas, p. 3. The *depósito* will be fully discussed in Chapter Three, for now see Deborah E. Kanter, "Hijos del pueblo: Family, Community, and Gender in Rural Mexico, the Toluca Region, 1730-1830" (PhD Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1993), pp. 299-302.

¹⁰⁷ AHAM, Box 1766, "Edicto cordillera del arzobispo Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana sobre el estado eclesiástico. Secretaría arzobispal".

essential in the process of moral reform of the Church: the collection of parish fees. He warned against the danger of asking too much, “si se exprime mucho el jugo se saca sangre”, so that the priest would end up being feared and hated rather than loved. If his request was fair, he would attract more parishioners, that is there would be more baptisms, marriages and burials, and there would be an increase in income. Certainly, by the 1760s the colonial Church was entering a new phase dictated by the Bourbon Reforms. The Crown was determined to regain a strict control over the administration of its colonies in the New World, after centuries in which the Church had been its direct agent through the extended presence of regular and secular clergy. As a consequence, the functions of the parish priest became limited essentially to teaching and preaching, avoiding interference with the material aspects of their parishioners’ lives.¹⁰⁸ Still, a sort of consistency with the path opened by Rubio y Salinas is visible.

This was the model of the clergy promoted by the archbishopric of Mexico, but how far was it acknowledged and reflected in the activities of the clergy in the Toluca Valley? From the documentation collected on the area, it seems that not all the clergy followed the ideal of good father and shepherd; in fact there were various accusations against local parish priests. In general, local clergy shared the Archbishops’ conception of the natives as miserable, wild and childish. However, there was less compassion in their words when they talked about the Indians, as emerges from the reports of inspections and the litigation in which they were involved. Although there was a dichotomy between the model of conduct proposed by the high hierarchy of the Church and local clergy’s behaviour, it has to be considered that the two Archbishops might have been rather idealistic, while local priests were in direct contact with the indigenous communities on a daily basis and may have had a better grasp of what was possible within the situation as it actually was.¹⁰⁹

Documentary evidence for the abuses of the local clergy is to be found in the *Libros de gobierno* of the three Archbishops during the first half of the eighteenth century. They were books in which all *actas* (bans, pastoral letters, and sentences) issued by the

¹⁰⁸ On the general effects the Bourbon Reforms had on the colonial Church, see Chapter One. For the changes here mentioned, see Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 158, 160.

¹⁰⁹ Ávila, *Arte*, pp. 12-3; Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 173-4.

heads of the Church were recorded in chronological order for each year.¹¹⁰ In these sources it is possible to see that some abuses of the clergy were reported to ecclesiastical authorities, even if the real number of abuses in the first half of the eighteenth century remains unknown. As a consequence, no certain conclusion can be drawn on how widespread the phenomenon was, but some idea can be obtained on the kind of abuses and the relationship between the local priest and the indigenous community. Under the rule of Lanciego y Eguilaz, in the years 1713-28, nine formal accusations were made by the Indians against the local clergy of Toluca. In addition, there were three cases in which an inspection of the parish was required by the Archbishop suspecting some abuse, plus one *edicto cordillera*, or ban sent to all parish priests to report on the state of their parishes. In the cases initiated by the Archbishop nothing is said about the kind of alleged abuses by the clergy, though in one accusation made by the Indians it was stated that the priest mistreated them. All other accusations remained very general, apart from one in which some Indians protested against being imprisoned.

For the following period, the years 1730-47, under archbishop Vizarrón y Eguiarreta, records are very scarce, almost as if the ecclesiastical administration did not take much care of keeping documentation of parish affairs. However, at least two accusations were made by the natives against a parish priest, one for abuse in the collection of parish fees and another for the priest's attempt to change indigenous practices, but nothing more is said about it. There was also one case opened by the Archbishop against a priest who refused to bury an Indian because the family could not pay the fees.

The best-recorded documentation is without doubt that associated with archbishop Rubio y Salinas, during the period 1749-62. The *actas* issued by the Archbishop contain many details and are listed in a more scrupulous way, so that for each year of

¹¹⁰ The *Libros de gobierno* of the three Archbishops were found in the AHAM. The references are: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de gobierno*, L9A/3, Box 2, 1713-28; AHAM, Juan Antonio de Vizarrón y Eguiarreta, *Libros de gobierno*, L9A/5, Box 3, 1730-47; AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de gobierno*, L9A/6, Box 3, 1749-62. In the case of Lanciego y Eguilaz, the records start from 1713, while his official office started in 1712; similarly for Rubio y Salinas: the records cover the period only until 1762, while the Archbishop held office until 1765.

his rule there was an average of 200 records (pastoral letters, bans, dispensations for marriage, appointments of clergy and accusations against them). This is surprising if we consider that for Lanciego y Eguilaz there were only 40-50 records in a year, and in the case of Vizarrón y Eguiarreta even less. As a consequence of this meticulous administration more information was recorded on the accusations against the clergy. Four accusations were made by Indians against their priests; two were cases of abuse in the collection of parish fees, while the other two cases were not specified. What is remarkable is that twenty cases were initiated by the Archbishop against the clergy of the Toluca Valley. There were eleven cases of accusation of sexual relationships, one case of disregard of the dispositions against trading, one case of poor administration of the parish, and seven cases of general abuse. Added to this was an *edicto cordillera* for all parish priests to report on the state of their parish. A summary of the accusations against the clergy of Toluca is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Accusations against the clergy reported in the *Libros de gobierno*

Accusations against the clergy	Lanciego y Eguilaz 1713-28	Vizarrón y Eguiarreta 1730-47	Rubio y Salinas 1749-62
By the Indians for	9	2	4
- mistreatment	1	—	—
- imprisonment	1	—	—
- high parish fees	—	1	2
- change of customs	—	1	—
- general abuse	7	—	2
By the Archbishop for	3	1	20
- no sacraments	—	1	—
- unchastity	—	—	11
- trading	—	—	1
- lack of care	—	—	1
- general abuse	3	—	7
Edicto	1	—	1

References for the *Libros de gobierno* of the three Archbishops: AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de gobierno*, L9A/3, Box 2, 1713-28; AHAM, Juan Antonio de Vizarrón y Eguiarreta, *Libros de gobierno*, L9A/5, Box 3, 1730-47; AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de gobierno*, L9A/6, Box 3, 1749-62.

As we have seen, in most of the cases the registration of the *actas* in the *Libros de gobierno* does not give much information about the kind of offence of which the clergy were accused. However, from other sources some more detailed examples may be given. In some cases, the parish priest or the coadjutor was accused of mistreating the Indians by beating and whipping. Or clergy took advantage of the native predisposition to serve them by requiring youths to take care of their cattle, sheep, or swine.¹¹¹ In addition, if the natives could not pay the parish dues, some priests confiscated their oxen or children.¹¹² As mentioned above, there were also cases in which the priest was accused of collecting unfair parish dues. These were bitter disputes in which the natives often presented themselves as good Christians who had been denied a fair treatment because of a greedy priest, and the clergy's own credibility was at stake. According to William Taylor, the Toluca Valley was famous for this kind of conflict since rural parishioners actively participated in parish devotions and so expected a fair behaviour from the priest.¹¹³ This seemed to be the most frequent complaint, together with criticisms of the violations of the moral behaviour that was normally expected from the clergy.

Under Rubio y Salinas many priests serving in the Valley were accused, or at least suspected, of informal relationships. In addition, during his *visitas* Rubio y Salinas realised that some clergy were involved in "comercio ilícito", that is, they earned money from trading, mining, and money lending, which was not permitted: "Nos hallamos penetrados de dolor, viendo a unos clérigos en ejercicios indignos de su profesión, comerciando ilícitamente, y con ganancias exorbitantes prohibidas por todo derecho, [...] mandamos que en adelante, ningunos de los clérigos se ocupe en dichos comercios, pena de quinientos pesos aplicados a los pobres de este partido, y de dos

¹¹¹ For these two examples the reference is: AGNBN, 1728, vol. 992, exp. 25, "Los naturales del pueblo de Totoltepec, jurisdicción de Toluca, sobre que fray Luís Verdeja, que los administra su parroquia, quiere que los hijos de los vecinos le cuiden el ganado".

¹¹² AGNBN, 1739, vol. 105, exp. 2, "Autos fechos a pedimento del común y naturales del pueblo de la Asunción, de la doctrina de Tenango del Valle, por faltas a su ministerio".

¹¹³ Taylor, *Magistrates*, pp. 44, 247. In all the examples of abuse here given, together with mistreatment or confiscation the natives claimed that the priest was charging extremely high parish fees. See also BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1000, "Carta pastoral de 10 de junio de 1756", pp. 2-3, and BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1007, "Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762", pp. 14-17, both of Rubio y Salinas.

años de reclusión.”¹¹⁴ The tenor of the Archbishop’s statement and the punishment he gave to the clergy indicate his extreme displeasure. Many were also admonished for not keeping a correct record of baptisms, marriages and burials in the parish books, which caused “gravísimos perjuicios” in Rubio y Salinas’ words, and he ordered that they should have high priority.¹¹⁵ Finally, another issue was their negligence in organising schools for native children. The Archbishop stated that this “rarísima vez, o nunca se ejecuta” while it should be taken as a serious responsibility.¹¹⁶ Some native communities even complained that the priest did not respect his duty of administering the sacraments, especially communion and baptism, or did not bury a corpse if the family could not pay. Or again, he did not celebrate the mass, as happened in San Mateo Mexicalzingo and San Miguel Chapultepec, jurisdiction of Metepec, where the congregations “sólo tienen una misa al mes, y cuando llega el religioso, no tienen tiempo de juntarse que ya acabó la misa”.¹¹⁷

As mentioned above, Rubio y Salinas took a firm line with his clergy for these kinds of charges, and encouraged all the inhabitants of pueblos to denounce their priests through a prior *circular de visita* that was to be fixed to the church door.¹¹⁸ His perception of the gravity of the accusations emerges from his words:

“Nos contrista sobre manera el ver malogradas nuestras advertencias, frustrados nuestros deseos, y desatendidos nuestros preceptos, por la conducta de algunos pocos, que olvidados de su obligación, no ponen el cuidado, que deben en la ejecución de aquellas cosas, que están obligados a hacer con la mayor atención, y vigilancia. [...] nos ha llenado de amargura el corazón, poniéndonos en las manos las armas del rigor, cuyo uso nunca habíamos estimado necesario.”¹¹⁹

In fact he condemned a priest in Atlacomulco for not administering communion to the Indians under the pretext that they were “rudos”, or wild. He was sentenced to a fine

¹¹⁴ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/6, records of 1755, no folio number.

¹¹⁵ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1000, “Carta pastoral de 10 de junio de 1756”, pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁶ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1007, “Carta pastoral de 25 de febrero de 1762”, pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁷ AGNBN, 1728, vol. 992, exp. 25, “Los naturales del pueblo de Totoltepec, jurisdicción de Toluca, sobre que fray Luís Verdeja, que los administra su parroquia, quiere que los hijos de los vecinos le cuiden el ganado”. See also BNM Fondo Franciscano, Box 108, exp. 1492, “Petición de indios”, f. 3.

¹¹⁸ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/8, f. 2.

¹¹⁹ BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1000, “Carta pastoral de 10 de junio de 1756”, pp. 1-2.

of 200 pesos to be given to the nuns of the Convent of Santa Inés in Mexico City.¹²⁰ Another great concern of the Archbishop was the fact that some priests charged fees for annual confession: “Nos hemos llenado de horror, y confusión viendo introducida en el santuario semejante abominación por los mismos a quienes por oficio incumbe desterrar de lugar santo todo lo que puede violar su pureza”.¹²¹ He prohibited charging for the administration of sacraments, punishing those priests he found guilty with suspension.

In some cases, the fact that the local clergy neither celebrated the mass nor fulfilled their normal obligations could be explained by the scarcity of priests.¹²² Normally it was the indigenous community that brought this problem to the notice of the archbishops in their requests for the appointment of new or additional clergy. This suggests that the Indians had a positive attitude toward the clergy and its functions. In fact, they did accuse some priests of abuses, but they did not refuse their presence within the community, on the contrary they wanted to be well served since “piden pretender vivir como católicos.”¹²³ In the *Libros de gobierno* some of these requests for priests’ appointment were recorded, together with demands for the establishment of a chapel in the village, or for special celebrations for Corpus Christi, or again for the status of *ayuda de parroquia* for a community. By being an *ayuda de parroquia*, a community could gain more authority and independence since it was no longer considered part of the parish itself, rather it formed a specific unit that took over some of the services provided by the parish, and helped in parish work. The basic difference from a parish was that there was no priest residing in the community, but a priest from the major parish came any time he was required for celebration.

Normally the Indians complained when they were not treated as true Catholics and the cases where a community totally rejected Christian celebrations were extremely rare.

¹²⁰ AHAM, Manuel Rubio y Salinas, *Libros de visita*, L10A/6, records of December 1757, no folio number.

¹²¹ AGNBN, 1765, vol. 931, exp. 8, “Investigación que ordenó hacer el arzobispo Rubio y Salinas sobre cierta contribución que se cobra a los indios por derechos de confesarlos anualmente”, ff. 1-1v.

¹²² BNM Fondo Franciscano, Box 108, exp. 1492, “Petición de indios”, ff. 3-4; Box 111, exp. 1520, “Falta de religiosos”, ff. 15-17. AGNBN, 1730, vol. 136, exp. 35, “Averiguación hecha por el juez eclesiástico de Toluca sobre la administración religiosa de San Mateo Atenco”.

¹²³ BNM Fondo Franciscano, Box 108, exp. 1492, “Petición de indios”, f. 3v.

However, this did occur in the pueblos of Chapultepec and S. Antonio Mexicalzingo, in 1711.¹²⁴ The local priest reported that, “por su osadía y mala indole”, not only did the natives refuse to go to mass, but also impeded its celebration by cutting the bell rope to hamper the usual procedure of “tocar la misa”.¹²⁵ He said the Indians refused mass and baptism for their children, and called for the intervention of the *teniente* of Metepec, who arrived with a Franciscan of the monastery of Calimaya. The *teniente* arrested the native authorities and a mass was celebrated, but no Indian attended; instead they were preparing an assault to free their representatives and dismiss the intruders, as they actually did. This is the only case of Indians openly refusing to attend mass in all the documentation examined for the selected period; it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Indians in the Toluca Valley generally accepted attendance at mass, and although they did complain about the conduct of the clergy, they were not anticlerical.¹²⁶ Christian ceremonies became part of the indigenous religiosity, or better they were adopted and reformulated by the Indians, who merged them with ancient beliefs. The meaning they gave to those rites was never fully Christian or orthodox in the sense the Catholic Church intended it.¹²⁷

Conclusion

The image of the Virgin Mary native women worshipped on altars and churches was not only the mother of God and of all creatures, but also a model of Christian life and the perfect woman they were asked to follow. Her virtues were exalted from the pulpit as well as whispered in the confessional. Undoubtedly the Virgin became a very popular figure, but the extent to which the Christian model of life that she represented was applied in the reality remains to be explored. She represented one extreme of a continuum of the female *imaginaire* in New Spain, the holy woman dedicated with

¹²⁴ AGNCR, 1711, vol. 217, exp. 4, ff. 19-26, “Querella del alcalde mayor de Metepec, de la jurisdicción de Ixtlahuaca, contra los naturales del pueblo de Chapultepec y S. Antonio Mexicalzingo por impedir la celebración del santo sacrificio de la misa”.

¹²⁵ AGNCR, 1711, vol. 217, exp. 4, ff. 19-26, “Querella del alcalde mayor de Metepec”, quotation is at folio 21.

¹²⁶ Taylor, *Magistrates*, p. 44.

¹²⁷ See Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 254-5.

self-sacrifice to her family and a Christian life. At the other pole, there was the indigenous woman demonised as instrument of sin and transgression. In the middle, indigenous women lived their lives, moving from one model to the other in the Church's eyes, in fact religious authorities were likely to attack them for their immorality, but the friars had also praised them as examples of good motherhood and dedication.

The different approaches were constantly present in the sources that have been used in this chapter to describe the Christian model of woman. However, they become particularly evident in moving from the explanation of Christian doctrine to the encounter between clergy and native women in their everyday life, as portrayed in the reports of the *visitas* and the various claims against the clergy. Despite providing interesting information and details on popular religiosity, the status of parishes, and abuses of local clergy, reports of this kind have been scarcely used for research. Through them, the highest authority of the Church in New Spain penetrated into the everyday world of rural native communities, exalting their faith and underscoring their weaknesses. At the same time, the archbishops proposed a model of father and good shepherd to be applied by local clergy, exhorting them to fulfil their ministry and uncovering their abuses, which they may have exaggerated or not seen in proper perspective.

The analysis of everyday contacts between clergy and native women has revealed how clergy in general and particularly the two archbishops Lanciego y Eguilaz and Rubio y Salinas tried to protect native women against abusive husbands, but at the same time saw them as unredeemed sinners who lived in informal unions disregarding Christian marriage. However, it is worth noting that despite the danger and evil that women represented, the heads of the Church exhorted their clergy to intervene in their lives. The urge for redemption was more important than the danger of temptation or idolatry. In the end, it seems that the Archbishops underestimated the risks, as testified by the numerous accusations against the local clergy of the Valley for informal relationships or for keeping native women in their houses in *depósito* or as servants. The clergy

were far from applying the model of behaviour proposed by their superiors in their own lives.

In a broad sense, both the religious models used by the colonial Church to acculturate the natives and to direct the clergy were similar to the rules and laws of colonial governmental authorities: there was a gap between the theory itself and its application in the everyday life of the colonial world. Within this space, the natives developed original and sometimes unexpected forms of resistance and adaptation to the new system.¹²⁸ Researching through this space provides insight into aspects of colonial life that could not be seen from a purely Spanish perspective.

The next chapter will evaluate the responses of the Nahua women of the Toluca Valley to the Christian model of woman at the most intimate level: the relationship with their husbands or partners.

¹²⁸ On the gap between the norm and its application in colonial indigenous society, see: Serge Gruzinski, "Normas cristianas y respuestas indígenas: apuntes para el estudio del proceso de occidentalización entre los indios de Nueva España", in *Del dicho al hecho: Transgresiones y pautas culturales en la Nueva España*, edited by Antonio Guzmán Vázquez, and Lourdes Martínez O. (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1989), pp. 135-51.

Chapter 3: The Intimate Sphere: Relations with Men

The chapter will analyse how Nahua women responded to the Christian model introduced by the Catholic authorities at the most intimate level of their lives, their relationship with their husbands or partners. Christian rules on marriage matters were clear; the Church exalted the sacred value of marriage in the sense that human love should be a mirror of God's love and the human relationship should be a "proyección del matrimonio simbólico de Cristo con la Iglesia."¹ But the efforts of the Church met with an unexpected reaction from the native women, a reaction that transformed Christian marriage into a very complex issue when it was applied within indigenous communities.

The chapter is divided into three main parts. First, an analysis of marriage practices and conditions under which Nahua women got married will be presented, showing the perception they had of the Christian sacrament and the differences from ancient practices. Moreover, the analysis will be extended to those cases that were regarded as violating the norm by Spanish authorities. The second part will be devoted to a discussion of women's reactions to their partners and husbands' extreme behaviours, such as the refusal to fulfil the promise of marriage or mistreatment. Finally, the last part will explore the perception that women had of their relationship particularly in terms of their degree of dependency or the freedom they could exert, within or outside marriage.

The primary sources for the chapter are marriage certificates and litigation mainly from the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca. The former were usually issued by the parish where the wedding took place, recorded in the parish book and also sent to the *Juzgado* as the main ecclesiastical authority of the area. It is highly probable that these records did not reach the centre of Toluca in a systematic way, so that the corpus of 116 records here examined is not comprehensive, rather, it is a sample from which certain generalisations can be drawn. As far as the litigation is concerned, it usually

¹ Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Familias Novohispanas*, Introduction, p. 24.

started with a claim presented by a person before the *Juzgado*, which considered the matter and issued the documentation that has been analysed here. When a case exceeded the *Juzgado*'s competence, it was sent to the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos* in Mexico City, a court of appeal for cases coming from outside the capital.² Lawsuits covered different issues, from polygamy and the broken promises of marriage, to mistreatment and adultery. The number and typology of cases that have been selected for analysis are summarised in Table 4.

PART I: MARRIAGE PRACTICES

Marriageways in Precolonial Nahua Society

The only sources on preconquest marriage are posterior and done under Spanish auspices, usually expressing idealised or normative descriptions, rather than representing a direct view of indigenous society, as happens with litigation and testaments; as a consequence, very little is known about the actuality of ancient marriage habits. It is certain that formal marriage with its own rules and ceremonies was present in the Nahua society before the colonisation. The family of a boy ready to get married consulted a matchmaker, an old woman who was expert in arranging marriages, who looked for a suitable girl. If an agreement was reached with the girl's family, the ceremony could take place, on a day that had to be chosen by the soothsayers as the most propitious to bring fortune and prosperity to the new couple. At night, the bride was carried to the groom's house on the back of the matchmaker, who then tied the bride's *huipil* and the groom's cape together, and the link between the couple was established. The couple offered copal to the gods and listened to the advice given by the elders, so that the relationship was legitimised in the eyes of the gods and the community. It is significant that the representations of the Codex Mendoza illustrate the matchmaker and the elders, but not specifically the parents; this

² The documents from the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca have been found in the AHAM, while the documentation issued by the *Provisorato* is presently dispersed in different branches of the AGN.

Table 4. Cases litigated before the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca, 1700-67

Judge	Broken Promises of Marriage	Mistreatment	Adultery	Informal Unions	Total of Cases per Judge
Br. Juan Varón de Lara (1716-32)	1	—	—	2	3
Br. Nicolás de Villegas (1733-39)	1	—	—	—	1
Br. Diego Carlos Orozco (1740-45)	2	—	—	—	2
Lic. Juan del Villar (1747-56/7)	4	8	2	5	19
Br. Joaquín José Aragón de Chacón (1750)	—	1	—	—	1
Lic. Jorge Martínez (1756/7-68)	4	—	2	5	11
	12	9	4	12	

- The total number of cases of broken promises of marriage that have been analysed in the chapter is thirteen, one case being brought directly before the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos* in Mexico City;
- The total number of cases of mistreatment that have been analysed in the chapter is twelve, three cases being brought directly before the *Provisorato* in Mexico City;
- The twelve cases of informal unions are not related to any intention of marriage, but it is worth mention that all the cases of broken promises of marriage imply a period of cohabitation, so that the total number of informal unions would be 25, as already explained in the chapter;
- The cases of polygamy have not been included since the sentence was issued by the *Provisorato* and not by the *Juzgado* of Toluca;
- The ecclesiastical judges here mentioned normally remained in charge for at least some years, or even for long periods, as with Juan Varón de Lara, who was judge for sixteen years; the only exception is Joaquín José Aragón de Chacón, who occupied the post on an interim basis in 1750.

is in tune with the fact that many young adults were already orphaned by the time of marriage, so that it was the influence of the community rather than the parents that mattered.³

Marriage was practically universal. It is thought to have taken place for girls at around the age of fifteen, and for boys a few years later since they spent more time in the *calmecac* or *telpochcalli*, the schools that have been discussed in Chapter Two.⁴ However, division of the classes in indigenous society favoured the development of two models of marriage and family, of which one in particular would conflict with the rules that the Catholic Church sought to impose. In fact, the *pipiltin* (nobles) were polygamists since marriage was an instrument to enhance political alliances, or to assure the maintenance of the lineage. It also enabled the nobles to take advantage of the numerous services that each wife could provide in terms of housework. On the contrary, monogamy was common among the *macehualtin* (commoners), mainly because they could not provide for more than one wife.⁵ For both nobles and commoners it was normal that the couple lived together some time before the official wedding ceremony; it was useful to assess the sincerity of the commitment. Moreover, marriage could be readily dissolved in case of serious problems.⁶ Considering these specific characteristics, it becomes evident why the Catholic Church launched a battle against the indigenous conception of marriage, trying to impose the Christian model instead.

³ Berdan and Anawalt, *The Codex Mendoza*, vol. 2, f. 61r, vol. 4, f. 60v; and McCaa, "Marriageways", pp. 13-6.

⁴ Robert McCaa, "Child Marriage and Complex Families Among the Nahuas of Ancient Mexico", *Latin American Population History Bulletin* (1994), pp. 2-7.

⁵ Very little is known about the details of preconquest land inheritance, but a few references to *cihuatlalli*, 'woman-land', in reference to preconquest times, suggest that it may have been an equivalent of dowry land, and if so, such lands could have been a factor in single versus multiple marriages. See Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 159-60. However, dowry did not seem to be a significant issue in Nahua society; it was more important in the Hispanic society, as various studies have shown; for an example, see Asunción Lavrin, and Edith Couturier, "Dowries and Wills: a View of Women's Socioeconomic Role in Colonial Guadalajara and Puebla 1640-1790", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59(2) (1979), pp. 280-304.

⁶ For general reference on marriageways in Nahua society before the conquest, see also: Pedro Carrasco, "Indian-Spanish Marriages in the First Century of the Colony", in *Indian Women*, pp. 89-90; Robert McCaa, "Tratos nupciales: la constitución de uniones formales e informales en México y España, 1500-1900", in *Familia y vida privada en la historia de Iberoamérica*, edited by Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, and Cecilia Rabell Romero (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, UNAM, 1996) pp. 26-7; María de Jesús Rodríguez, "La mujer y la familia en la sociedad mexicana", in *Presencia y transparencia*, pp. 23-6.

Christian Marriage in Colonial Society

Due to the general acceptance of polygamy, the friars first and the secular clergy later found it very difficult to impose the model of Christian marriage. Many laws were issued to address the matter. According to the *Ordenanza para el gobierno de indios* (1546) polygamy, adultery and union outside marriage were forbidden and punished, while the norms of the Council of Trent (1563) established that marriage should be unique and all unions without marriage were deemed illegal and had to be reprimanded.⁷ The post-Tridentine Church underlined the sacred value and solemnity of marriage, trying to limit sexuality to its sphere and censuring polygamy as contrary to the principles of uniqueness, indissolubility and cohabitation at the base of Christian marriage. However, the application of these norms in colonial society was not simple and many different situations originated from it. Men and women often maintained relationships outside the formal link of marriage. Moreover, people frequently moved to find better conditions of life, and these movements favoured new relationships that sometimes led to another marriage. Among Spaniards and *castas* in particular it was common that those men who had left their homes ended up getting married in the new place they settled. They knew that formally the second marriage was illegal, but they could gain a good reputation within the new community, and be integrated into its social and economic life.⁸ As a consequence, they did not always set a good example for converted Indians. In addition to that, the model of marriage that the Church tried to impose was based in principle on a Christian morality in which husband and wife had mutual obligations. This is clearly illustrated in Sahagún's sermons: the husband had to maintain his wife and family, while the wife had to obey and satisfy her husband. However, this model was strictly linked to the conception of a woman as subordinated to her husband's authority, as already indicated in Chapter Two, a conception that often limited the effectiveness of mutual obligations. This created a

⁷ Muriel, *Mujeres*, pp. 319-20; McCaa, "Tratos nupciales", p. 35; S. L. Cline, "The Spiritual Conquest Reexamined: Baptism and Christian Marriage in Early Sixteenth Century Mexico", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 73(3) (1993), pp. 472-6.

⁸ Dolores Enciso Rojas, "Matrimonio y bigamia en la capital del Virreinato", in *Familias Novohispanas*, pp. 131-2. Richard Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists. Marriage, Family, and Community in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 16, 31-2. For an interesting analysis of marriage in the Hispanic society, see Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico. Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

gap between Christian morality in theory and its application through civil law and ecclesiastical rules.⁹

A similar discrepancy prevailed between norm and practice in the introduction of Christian marriage to the indigenous world. The Church's authority and its rules replaced the conception of the union between two people as part of a cosmic vision determined by fate, through the intervention of the matchmaker and the fortune-teller, and by the community, which determined the choice of partners. In the Christian marriage native young men and women would be freer to choose and the couple would be more independent from the community; however, they would have to apply monogamy as a strict rule.¹⁰ As a consequence, since this conflicted with their own perceptions of marriage, they reacted by preserving ancient practices. In fact, many violations of the norm were reported, especially informal unions and polygamy, and the ecclesiastical courts punished offenders with whipping and exile from their pueblos.¹¹

This situation remained basically the same until the Bourbon reforms so that, in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Church was still applying the dispositions of the Council of Trent in terms of marriage practices.¹² However, while casual sex, informal unions, and adultery seem to have become a normal feature of Spanish colonial society, the indigenous population registered the lowest rate of illegitimacy of all the various ethnic groups of the time.¹³ Thus it can be said that at least from this point of view the Indians were conforming to the model of marriage imposed by the Church. Even where polygamy was maintained to a certain extent, the Indians sought to celebrate the sacrament in the church (actually it was through this process that

⁹ Arthur J.O. Anderson, "Aztec Wives", in *Indian Women*, pp. 68-71; Sahagún, *Historia general*, pp. 126-30; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Familia y orden colonial* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1998), pp. 56, 63.

¹⁰ Gruzinski, "Individualization", pp. 100-1.

¹¹ Elizabeth Anne Kuznesof, "Raza, clase y matrimonio en la Nueva España: estado actual del debate", in *Familias novohispanas*, pp. 376-7, 382.

¹² On the Church's attitude towards marriage in the eighteenth century, see Sergio Ortega Noriega, "Los teólogos y la teología novohispana sobre el matrimonio, la familia y los comportamientos sexuales. Del Concilio de Trento al fin de la colonia", in *Del dicho al hecho*, p. 35.

¹³ On the Spanish colonial society, see Haslip-Viera, *Crime and Punishment*, pp. 67-9; on illegitimacy among Indians, see McCaa, "Marriageways", pp. 24-5.

polygamous unions were discovered), as the cases discussed below will show. This cannot be taken as a sign of deep conversion to the Christian meaning of the sacrament, but at least of indigenous concern for the formal ceremony itself.

Finally, a few words need to be said about the practice of marriage itself. The common practice in case of Christian marriage for both the Spanish and the Indians was that the couple had to present themselves in front of the *cura ministro* (priest in charge) of their parish and declare they wanted to get married, being free from any other commitment. Subsequently, the religious authorities had to record the declaration of both the man and the woman, listening to them separately. Even if most of the time the *cura* heard the declaration, the archbishop had disposed that it was under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical judge.¹⁴ Once the commitment of the couple was ascertained, the banns (*amonestaciones*) could be issued. According to the Council of Trent, the priest had to read the intention of the couple to get married for three festive days “inter misarum solemnias”, to make it public. If no canonical impediment arose within 24 hours after the last reading of the banns, the couple could get married. The marriage in front of the priest was then recorded in the parish book of marriages, and confirmed by witnesses; the documentation generated by the process was called in Spanish *diligencias matrimoniales*, or marriage certificates. The number of witnesses could change, but the majority of *diligencias* in the archive of the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca contain only two witnesses, normally men; it was extremely rare that a woman was asked to be a witness at public and formal acts. Moreover, even if it was stated that both the man and the woman had to declare their freedom and will to get married, in most of the proceedings here examined only the man’s declaration is reported. Of a total of 116 *diligencias matrimoniales* for the early eighteenth century, only 28 bore the declaration of the woman, and they belong to the late period, close to the middle of the century. Therefore, it seems that even if the obligation of having both declarations was stated by the archbishop Lanciego y Eguilas in 1727, this norm was applied only towards the middle of the eighteenth century, and in a partial way,

¹⁴ For details on the practice of marriage, see: AHAM, Box 1727, “Prohivese que la recepción de las declaraciones de las mujeres que han de casarse se cometa a los BRPP curas ministros”; Box 1731, “Se da la forma para los despachos que se han de librar en los matrimonios”.

under the rule of Rubio y Salinas, when the discipline of the Church became more strict toward the application of rules and the clergy's behaviour.¹⁵

The Context of the Sacrament

Most of the *diligencias matrimoniales* found for the Valley of Toluca do not provide full details on the couple and the witnesses. In fact, of a total of 116 proceedings, as reported above, only 39 give information about the age of the contracting parties. Despite the relatively small number, it is important to comment on some features, since they can provide insight on the practices of marriage in the Valley. Only in five cases out of 39 the woman was older than the man, but the difference was usually of few years. Juana de Dios Muñoz, of Xilotepec, was the only exception since at the age of 60 she married Nicolás Jiménez, a Spaniard 47 years old.¹⁶ Perhaps this case can be explained by the fact that Juana de Dios was a *cacique*,¹⁷ a noble indigenous woman, so probably her Spanish husband might have expected some advantage from the marriage. In the majority of cases, the woman was from five to ten years younger than the man she was marrying, while in the other cases she was from one to five years younger. If we consider the range from ten to fifteen years of difference, there are only three cases, and from twenty to 25 only two. This situation confirms the general pattern of women marrying men at least a few years older than themselves.¹⁸

It might be expected that the decision to get married was not dictated by special conditions, apart from the motivation of the couple or the interest of the two families. However, the *diligencias* reveal that in some cases specific situations might have

¹⁵ Most of the *diligencias* with declarations of women correspond to the period 1749-1765, when Manuel Rubio y Salinas was archbishop; only very few are from the period of Lanciego y Eguilas (1712-1728) and of Vizarrón de Eguiarreta (1730-1747). Attention is drawn on the fact that the *diligencias matrimoniales* of the *Juzgado* cannot be identified with a specific part of the Toluca Valley but seem to come from pueblos spread all over the Valley.

¹⁶ AGNM 1755, vol. 12, exp. 2, ff. 4-6, "Solicitud, viudos, Nicolas Ximenes, español, 47 años, y Juana de Dios Muñoz, india cacique, 60 años; Xilotepec".

¹⁷ The usual term would be *cacica*, *cacique* being the masculine version, but here the latter is reported following the original expression in the document. We must presume that in the Nahuatl context she probably bore the title *doña* and that the Spanish clerk omitted it.

¹⁸ For the Nahuas this pattern is explained in McCaa, "Child Marriage", pp. 6-7. It was a pattern generally common also in Spanish society in New Spain, as unanimously reported by the literature.

influenced the decision. For instance, 39 cases could be identified in which widowhood was associated with the new marriage. In nine cases both the partners had lost their previous companion and they sought to start a new life through another marriage. When only one person was a widow or widower, widowers were slightly more likely to remarry than widows, also due to age difference and life expectancy. In fact, there were seventeen cases in which widowers started the proceeding, as opposed to thirteen for widows. Moreover, it can be observed that both widows and widowers spent a similar period of time after the death of a spouse before seeking another marriage; the range in the *diligencias* varies from six months to five years from the death of the previous partner. There were few cases that did not follow this pattern. For instance, one man got married for the third time after his two previous wives died, and another man got married after only one month of widowhood. No similar cases are recorded for women; instead the same Juana de Dios Muñoz we saw in the previous case waited for eighteen years before getting married again. The similarity of both genders in this respect seems to be different to the period immediately after the conquest and presumably before it; according to Robert McCaa, while remarriage was common also in the preconquest indigenous society, widowers remarried very quickly, in less than one year, while widows took much more time, normally four years.¹⁹

Another condition that could have affected the status of women and pressured some of them to marry was the existence of an informal relationship, perhaps with a child born of it as well. Actually, only five cases reported that the couple was living together before getting married, and of them in only one case had the woman given birth to a child.²⁰ Due to the fact that living together for a while before getting married had been a common practice for the natives before the conquest, it seems strange that only few cases were reported. I tend to think that close relationships and sexual intercourse without being married were actually very common, so common that probably they were not mentioned once the couple decided to get married, unless their relation had

¹⁹ McCaa, "Child Marriage", p. 7.

²⁰ All the cases are from the AHAM: Box 1738, "Matrimonios, varios"; Box 1758, "Diligencias matrimoniales entre Masimiliano indio y Pascuala María india"; Box 1751, "Diligencias matrimoniales entre Cristobal, natural y vecino del pueblo de S. Miguel Zinacantepec, y Francisca Javiera"; Box 1764(2), "Matrimoniales entre Marco Antonio Ramirez, y María Eugenia Romero"; Box 1753, "Libro de diligencias matrimoniales de vecinos de Toluca".

become a sort of scandal that accelerated the decision, often after the intervention of the religious authorities. Informal unions were relevant in another case, when the woman wanted to legalise the relation and brought her partner or ex-partner in front of the ecclesiastical judge to force him to comply with his obligation, as occurred in the case of broken promises of marriage examined below.

Moreover, a woman could be urged to marry also because she was in a weak economic position, with nobody able to support her. Nine of the women considered in the *diligencias matrimoniales* were orphans at the time of marriage, while four more did not know who their parents were and in two cases the woman was an illegitimate daughter.²¹ Finally, there were some special circumstances when the parents did not agree to their daughter's marriage, so she decided to make her decision definitive by fleeing and presenting herself directly to the priest together with her fiancé.²²

The procedure outlined in the previous section was normally followed in case of Christian marriage, but there were some cases that remained outside the norm. First of all, there were cases where the couple had to ask for a dispensation to get married. This occurred eleven times in the *diligencias* of the Valley of Toluca for the selected period.²³ In eight cases, the man or the woman who wanted to get married had

²¹ Cases in which the woman was an orphan: AGNM 1749, vol. 1, exp. 36, ff. 158-61, "Información matrimonial. Juan José negro esclavo, y María Lucia india, Xilotepec"; AHAM, Box 1723, "Diligencias matrimoniales de Juan Antonio de los Reyes, mestizo, y María Isabel, india"; Box 1729, "Diligencias matrimoniales de Juan Cayetano Telles mestizo y María Rosa india"; Box 1751, "Diligencias matrimoniales entre Cristobal, natural y vecino del pueblo de S. Miguel Zinacantepec y Francisca Javiera"; Box 1750(1), "Información que se ha hecho de casamientos desde la fecha que arriba contiene en Toluca"; Box 1761-62, "Diligencias matrimoniales entre Juan Antonio García, español, y Gertrudis Gregoria, india"; Box 1720-21, "Casamientos del año de 1721"; Box 1719-20, "Matrimonios del año 1720"; Box 1761, "Diligencias ejecutadas en virtud del licenciado José Alejo Hurtado de Mendoza, cura de Malacatepec". Unknown parents: AHAM, Box 1767-68, "Diligencia matrimonial entre Isidro García español, y Jeronima Gertrudis María"; Box 1767(2), "Matrimonio entre Cristobal de Santa Ana Martínez y Juana Gertrudis, mulato con india"; Box 1766(2), "Matrimonio entre Joseph de Mondragon y Felis Flora Antonia Gonzales, mestizo y india"; Box 1767(2), "Matrimoniales entre Doroteo Antonio Gonzales y Pascuala María, mulato libre e india". Unknown father: AHAM, Box 1729, "Diligencias matrimoniales entre Gabriel Gonzales, morisco libre, y María del Castillo, india"; Box 1761-62, "Diligencias matrimoniales entre Julian de la Cruz y María Benita Gamboa, indios".

²² AHAM, Box 1760, "Matrimoniales entre Bernardo Pichardo Y Juana Paula de Tapia, india"; Box 1764(2), "Matrimoniales entre Marco Antonio Ramirez y María Eugenia Romero".

²³ AGNBN 1765-66, vol. 568, exp. 1, "Varias diligencias matrimoniales y dispensas de parentesco"; AGNBN 1753, vol. 441, exp. 5, "Dispensa de 2º grado de afinidad de Tomás de la Cruz y Antonia Basilia, indios"; and exp. 24, "Dispensa de 2º grado de afinidad de Josef Guifones y María Dolores"; AGNBN 1763, vol. 890, exp. 1, "Varios expedientes sobre dispensas de impedimento para contraer matrimonio", there are six cases inside; AHAM, Box 1763, "Testimonio de la dispensación de

previously had a relationship with a relative of the partner he/she was intended to marry, for “segundo grado de afinidad”. In four cases the impediment was for “cuarto grado de consanguinidad”, so the contracting parties were relatives, and in one case the man asked for a dispensation only mentioning that he had a relationship with the woman he wanted to marry before her husband died, but nothing was specified in terms of kinship links. In six of the cases at least one of the two contracting parties was widowed, and was probably trying to start a new life with somebody he or she was already acquainted with. Another detail that emerges from the dispensations is that in four cases the couple had been charged with an irregular relationship, and in two cases the woman was pregnant, while in one case she already had two children from the relationship.

When there was a situation of this kind it was not possible to start with the *diligencias matrimoniales* until the couple had received a dispensation from the archbishop. Normally indigenous people would receive exemption no matter the degree of kinship.²⁴ Most of the cases recorded by the *Juzgado* or the *Provisorato* in Mexico City occurred under the rule of Rubio y Salinas while only one dispensation was given before, in 1732. Once again, it seems that this Archbishop was particularly concerned about respect for Christian rules governing marriage practices for both the clergy and the flock. Since the situation was not regular, the archbishop had to intervene to redeem it, and as a consequence penitence was needed to restore the norm. Normally, the priest who presented the case asked for mercy in the judgement of informal unions, as happened with the chaplain of the monastery of Calimaya in 1753. In fact, he wrote: “pobres, fragiles indios previendo los daños que de su incontinencia se siguen, muchas veces ocasionados de habitar, dormir, y morar en una sola pobre, y desabrigada piesa.”²⁵ Therefore, poor conditions and promiscuity had to be taken into account

impedimento de cuarto grado de consanguinidad para el matrimonio entre Luis Rosales y Ana Ortega”; AHAM, Box 1732(1), “José Antonio indio, y Juliana María, assí mismo india, solicitan dispensa de impedimento de segundo grado de afinidad”.

²⁴ According to the archbishop Manuel Rubio y Salinas, the exemption could be given “con los indios sin limitación de grado y con los españoles y demás castas en excepción del primero y segundo”, in BNM LAF, Pastoral letter R. 1000, “Carta pastoral de 10 de junio de 1756”, pp. 9-10; AGNBN 1761, vol. 82, exp. 58, “Dispensa de impedimento de primer grado de afinidad para que puedan contraer matrimonio Francisco Jacobo y Andrea Martina”.

²⁵ AGNBN 1753, vol. 441, exp. 5, “Dispensa de 2º grado de afinidad de Tomás de la Cruz y Antonia Basilia, indios”.

since they encouraged sinful behaviour. The judgement that the archbishop gave was very similar in all cases. Basically it was a spiritual penitence: the couple had to confess and take communion before getting married and for six months or one year after the wedding at all the celebrations related to the Virgin Mary. They also had to recite the rosary every Saturday. This was normally considered enough if the impediment to the wedding was concealed, but if the couple had made it public, the archbishop could require them to pay a fine (four pesos in one case), and also to sweep the church (in the same case for six months).²⁶

Another case that can be considered outside the norm was when, against all expectation, an indigenous woman decided to interrupt the procedure of the wedding because she no longer wanted to get married. These cases were rare. Only two have been found for the selected period, and they provide few details about the events, but at least Isabel María, of Metepec, gave her motivation to the judge in 1756.²⁷ She intended to marry, but she realised her fiancé was delaying and thought he was changing his mind and “de llegarse a efectuar el casamiento se le prepara mala vida y trabajos.” She was determined not to suffer the rest of her life for that decision, showing a great sense of independence and self-consideration. What is more, she insisted that Antonio de la Cuadra should pay her twelve pesos for the time she had lost and for her support.

Polygamy

To conclude the treatment of marriage practices, another situation clearly violating the norms of Christian marriage was polygamy. Not many cases of polygamy have been found in the documentation of the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca, but they reveal such important details on the intimate sphere, as well as on Church's policies, that a

²⁶ For details about punishment see AGNBN 1753, vol. 441, exp. 5, “Dispensa de 2º grado de afinidad de Tomás de la Cruz y Antonia Basilia, indios”, and exp. 24, “Dispensa de 2º grado de afinidad de Josef Guiñones y María Dolores”.

²⁷ The two cases are: AHAM, Box 1755-56, “Domingo Bartolomé del barrio de S. Bernardo manifiesta que su hija y el se desisten y aparten del matrimonio”; Box 1755-56, “Diligencias matrimoniales de Antonio de la Cuadra con Isabel María”, from which the quotation is taken.

separate section for them is justified.²⁸ In all cases, the accused had married a second time while her/his first spouse was still alive, this being an enormous sin in the eyes of the Church because it contradicted the unique and sacred value of marriage. Polygamy was such a serious matter that it exceeded the ordinary competence of the ecclesiastical judge, and cases were passed up to the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos* in Mexico City. The sentence then went back to the local judge to be carried out. This is what happened in María Josefa's case, and through the records kept during the lawsuit it was possible to draw out some more information on the events.²⁹ The woman was from the pueblo of Cacalomacan, and first she married Felipe de Santiago, a native of the same pueblo; then, while he was still alive, she went to Metepec and there she married a second time, to a man called Gaspar Melchor. In 1726 she was accused and confined in the archbishopric's jail, where she confessed and explained how, once she was in the pueblo of San Buenaventura, near Cacalomacan, a woman told her and swore that her first husband had died. Her declaration was received by the *provisor* don Juan Ignacio Castoreña y Ursúa, who pronounced the sentence and sent it back to the judge in Toluca, don Juan Varón de Lara, to be carried out there.³⁰

According to the *provisor*'s prescription, the sentence had to be performed in the parish church of Toluca, which became the stage for an interesting ceremony that provides insight on the punishment that awaited bigamists. The woman entered the church in procession, "con sogá a la garganta y coroza"³¹, and with a written description of her crime and a green candle in her hands, which was to be given to the priest as symbol of repentance. The ceremony had to take place on a festive day, during the main mass, so that all the people would be there and could be present at a public exemplification of Christian doctrine. Moreover, the sinner had to keep standing during the celebration, so that she was even more visible to the crowd, and could only kneel from the Sanctus to the Holy Communion. After the Gospel, the sin

²⁸ In the documentation produced on these cases, the terms used are 'poligamia' or 'doble casamiento'; for that reason they have been translated by 'polygamy' instead of 'bigamy', despite the fact that the accused married no more than twice.

²⁹ AHAM, Box 1726, "Causa contra María Josefa india natural del pueblo de Cacalomacan", f. 1.

³⁰ AHAM, Box 1726, "Causa contra María Josefa", ff. 1, 4.

³¹ *Soga* was a rope that was put around the penitent's neck; *coroza* was a synonym of the more common *gorra*, a hat with a conic form, and precisely: "El rocadero hecho en punta, que por infamia y nota

was spelt out and the priest gave a speech as a recommendation for the sinner and a lesson for the flock.³² By examining the sentence, it emerges how the *provisor* used harsh words against the native woman: “con poco temor de Dios Nuestro Padre y en grave daño de su anima y consciencia e irrisión del Santo Sacramento del matrimonio” she committed “gravísimos delitos dignos de ejemplar castigo.”³³ It seems evident that polygamy was truly considered a serious offence against Christian morality. Moreover, when María Josefa was being kept in the archbishopric’s jail waiting for the lawsuit, the chaplain was asked to test if “estaba capaz en las oraciones y misterios de Nuestra Santa Fe, y no estándolo se le encarga la eduque y enseñe.”³⁴ These details show the special attention given to women and the need to redeem them, as well as the commitment to teach the flock the meaning of marriage.

Normally the sentence was not limited to the spiritual aspect of repentance during the celebration, but also included physical punishment. In fact, María Josefa was condemned to 100 lashes. Whipping in public was a common punishment which did not provoke indignation. However, the sentence seemed to be extremely severe against the native woman. The *provisor* ordered that the day following the mass the woman was to be “sacada por las calles públicas de dicha ciudad con ley de sogá al cuello y corozá en la cabeza en bestia de albarda³⁵ desnuda de la cintura para arriba a son de trompeta y voz de pregonero que publique su delito.”³⁶ During this procession she was to be whipped. Not only was María Josefa punished for the sin she had committed, but the sentence aimed to expose her to public contempt. Almost to underline the importance of the event, the physical punishment was to take place on another day after the ceremony, and on the streets of Toluca, not at the church’s door, as usually happened. In fact, the ecclesiastical judge of Toluca ordered that it was to be carried out a Friday “día de concurso y feria”³⁷ to make sure that everybody would be there.

ponen a los reos de diversos delitos”. The terms are explained in Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*.

³² AHAM, Box 1726, “Causa contra María Josefa”, ff. 1-3.

³³ AHAM, Box 1726, “Causa contra María Josefa”, f. 3.

³⁴ AHAM, Box 1726, “Causa contra María Josefa”, f. 2.

³⁵ *Albarda* was a blanket used for beasts of burden (from Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*).

³⁶ AHAM, Box 1726, “Causa contra María Josefa”, f. 3.

³⁷ AHAM, Box 1726, “Causa contra María Josefa”, f. 4.

The woman was to be brought in a procession on a horse, half naked, with trumpets, and with her crime displayed in writing. Nobody could have missed such a spectacle. It should be noticed that at the beginning of the trial the *provisor* had sentenced María Josefa to 200 lashes, but the amount was reduced on request of the defender. Finally, the woman was to be employed in an *obraje* for two years.

The documentation of the *Juzgado* contains another case of a native woman accused of polygamy, Tomasa Juliana, in 1705, and two cases of indigenous men.³⁸ In the case of the woman there is only the accusation, not the sentence, so we do not know the outcome. What is interesting is that the woman declared that she had left her first husband because he mistreated her and had a lover, while the husband denied all accusations and presented six witnesses. According to the records, it seems that the husband provided for his wife, while she was often leaving the house and coming back after short periods. Therefore Tomasa Juliana appears to be a native woman who lived her life making her own decisions, and having a conception of marriage very different from that of the Church.

Considering the two cases of men condemned for polygamy, which include the sentence, some surprising differences from the case of María Josefa emerge. The ceremony in the church was more or less the same, with the same symbols, even if in the woman's case much more stress was put on the gravity of the crime in the *provisor's* words. However, disparity becomes evident when the physical punishment is considered. While the woman was sentenced to 100 lashes on the street on a specific day reserved for the procession, the two men were whipped at the church door the same day of the ceremony, and they received only 25 and 50 lashes respectively.³⁹ Actually, the *provisor* noted many times in his sentence against María Josefa that what was needed was a punishment that would be a public example to others. This

³⁸ AHAM, Box 1705, "Contra Tomasa Juliana por duplicidad de matrimonios". The two cases of men are: AHAM, Box 1737, "Proceso seguido contra de Nicolás de San Juan, indio, por casarse dos veces", and Box 1747, "Causa en contra de Juan Guillermo, alias Antonio Leonardo, indio natural por poligamia".

³⁹ AHAM, Box 1737, "Proceso seguido contra de Nicolás de San Juan, indio, por casarse dos veces", f. 3; Box 1747, "Causa en contra de Juan Guillermo, alias Antonio Leonardo, indio natural por poligamia", f. 3.

insistence is lacking in the sentences against Nicolás de San Juan and Juan Guillermo, the two men condemned for polygamy. Thus the moral and physical pain of María Josefa, forced to appear half naked and dressed only with the symbols of scorn, seemed to be a striking reminder of the gravity of the crime of polygamy to the population at large, even if some doubt remains about its efficacy in changing indigenous behaviour.

In view of the severity applied to the native woman, it might be inferred that María Josefa was a victim of prejudice for being a woman. It is true that no other complete cases concerning native bigamist women have been found in the documentation to strongly defend this hypothesis. However, since the normal punishment for polygamy by the Holy Inquisition in Mexico City was 100 lashes on the streets regardless of gender, it can be assumed that the *Provisorato* was at least merciful towards men, if not cruel against women.⁴⁰ In cases of polygamy against Spanish and mestizo women, prejudice was a common element in the suit, at least according to the words of some ecclesiastical officials: “[...] la pluralidad simultánea de maridos, tanto más extraño, reprehensible e indisciplinable que la poligamia entre los hombres, cuanto es más la timidez y rubor natural de las mujeres por su frágil sexo.”⁴¹ A similar prejudice could have operated in the suits that had native women as protagonists, as in María Josefa’s case.

A final consideration concerns the number of cases. As previously said, the cases of polygamy considered by the *Juzgado* of Toluca were very few. Moreover, Richard Boyer, a scholar who has written on the topic, reports that the number of cases referring to Indians he found during his research were very few compared to Spaniards, mestizos and *castas*. Despite the small number, it is within the realm of possibility that polygamy, having been morally accepted in preconquest times, was still common in indigenous communities. In this light, the scarcity of cases recorded by an ecclesiastical court such as the *Juzgado* of Toluca, may lead one to speculate

⁴⁰ On the punishment of polygamy by the Holy Inquisition, see Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists*, p. 232.

⁴¹ The document comes from AGNI, and it is reported by Dolores Enciso Rojas, “Desacato y apego a las pautas matrimoniales. Tres casos de poliandria del siglo XVII”, in *Del dicho al hecho*, p. 116; see also pp. 115-34 for general references on polygamy.

that polygamy was in the end generally tolerated since it was extremely difficult to eradicate. Thus, only those cases that provoked a scandal were considered and appeared in the documentation. On the other hand, the few punishments could also suggest that in the eighteenth century the Indians were abandoning their former practices and conforming to the rules of Christian marriage, or practising other forms of cohabitation. The question remains open since there is a lack of research on polygamy in indigenous communities during colonial times.

PART II: FEMALE REACTION IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

The 'palabra de casamiento' and the Matter of Honour

A matter in which native women proved to be extremely reactive was in accusing men who did not fulfil a promise of marriage, or 'palabra de casamiento', and who, taking advantage of the promise, had started sexual relationships. This was the case of Petrona de la Cruz of Tlacotepec (jurisdiction of Metepec), who in 1758 denounced Pascual Pedro when he was about to get married to another woman, claiming that the wedding could not take place because Pedro "me es deudor de mi virginidad y [...] me dejó con una hija."⁴² She insisted that the man had to fulfil his promise, or alternatively he had to pay her for the harm he caused. It seems that Pascual Pedro reconsidered the matter and ended up declaring he would marry Petrona, and abandoning the other woman, whose mother presented an accusation to the *Juzgado*. Petrona was lucky that Pedro acknowledged his responsibility, for normally men brought before the *Juzgado* did not decide to get married and fulfil the promise.⁴³

The *Juzgado* examined thirteen cases in the first half of the eighteenth century, and only in one case did the victim's father present the accusation; in all the others the

⁴² AHAM, Box 1758, "Autos formados a pedimento de Petrona de la Cruz india, contra Pascual Pedro deudor de su virginidad".

⁴³ Juan Javier Pescador, "Entre la espada y el olivo: pleitos matrimoniales en el Provisorato Eclesiástico de México, siglo XVIII", *La familia en el mundo iberoamericano*, edited by Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru and Cecilia Rabell (Mexico City: UNAM), pp. 194-202.

woman herself called for the judge's intervention.⁴⁴ Normally the woman asked that the accused man fulfil his promise, or alternatively pay her compensation. This meant that the man had to pay something for the woman's loss of honour in society's eyes, and for the fact that she was pregnant or had already given birth to a baby as a result of the relationship. The fact of being pregnant or having already had a baby seemed to be the most common reason that encouraged women to make a denunciation.

The active role played by women requires further consideration. A woman did not always accept the decision, or better the failure of a man to make a decision. In fact, she usually waited at least one year to present an accusation, but in the end she acted to defend her position. The delay in making the denunciation might have been justified by the fact that women preserved the hope of marrying the man in question, "yo con esa fe vivía"⁴⁵ confessed María Francisca, of San Miguel Aticpac. However, when illusion had to face the reality of long silences and promises were perpetually neglected, some women at least reacted. In some cases, the woman begged for the fulfilment of the promise as the only possible solution, as "total remedio" so that her virginity "no se quede en el aire."⁴⁶ Sometimes the claim became dramatic, as in the declaration of Hilaria, of San Felipe (jurisdiction of Metepec), who required the wedding to take place "porque no hay razón ni ley para que yo me quede perdida, expuesta a mil ofensas contra Dios Nuestro Señor y su Madre Santísima."⁴⁷ It has to be said that women expressed such despair only in three cases; normally the alternative of monetary compensation was seen as sufficient and satisfactory. Therefore, the majority of women in these cases proved to be extremely practical;

⁴⁴ The other cases used to analyse the topic come from the AHAM: Box 1751, "Criminales contra Manuel Gomez español por incontinencia"; Box 1766(2), "Causa de José Severino, indio preso por no cumplir palabra de matrimonio a Rosalia María india"; Box 1766(1), "Autos contra Manuel Mejía español, por no cumplir su promesa matrimonial a Juliana Tomasa india"; Box 1763, "Denuncia de María Francisca, india, de haber dado lo mejor de su cuerpo a Dionisio Antonio Vasquez"; Box 1752, "María Dolores soltera acusa a Urbano de Humada soltero por haberle quitado la virginidad"; Box 1739-40, "Autos por palabra de matrimonio"; Box 1743-4, "Autos por palabra de matrimonio"; Box 1752, "Autos hechos contra Salvador Antonio ladino vecino de esta ciudad"; Box 1718, "Matrimonios"; Box 1736, "María Pascuala natural y vecina del pueblo de Santa Ana demanda a Marcos de Santiago"; Box 1748-49, "Teodora Martina contra José Elias por violación e incumplimiento de palabra de casamiento". A case was found in the AGN: AGNM 1762, vol. 209, exp. 35, "María de los Angeles contra Tomás Rodriguez".

⁴⁵ AHAM, Box 1763, "Denuncia de María Francisca".

⁴⁶ AHAM, Box 1751, "Criminales contra Manuel Gomez".

⁴⁷ AHAM, Box 1743-44, "Autos".

concern for their survival and for the maintenance of the baby prevailed over the romantic feeling of waiting for a marriage that would never take place. The strong practical sense and the insistence shown on obtaining financial support greatly contrasted with the model of woman given by the Church, ethereal as a Virgin, with no concrete worry about survival since she was enclosed in the domestic realm where all was provided by her husband or father.

Despite the strong emphasis on the material consideration, the cases analysed here reveal how often women were worried about their honour in front of the community as a result of having had relations with a man who did not agree to marry them. Many times they used the expressions “me perdió” or “me dejó perdida.” In fact, even in other cases not strictly related to the promise of marriage the importance given to honour and reputation is clearly expressed, as with Bernabela Antonia, of Santa Barbara Xolalpa, who appeared in front of the judge to defend the reputation of her daughters as virgins when a neighbour “les a quitado su crédito a gritos y pregones en la plaza pública.”⁴⁸ The mother was alarmed by the possibility that, due to the “mala saeta” of her neighbour, the girls would not find anybody likely to marry them. This may be an example of the penetration of values from the Spanish culture into the practices of the indigenous family. Honour was not conceived in the same manner by the ancient Nahuas. As previously noted, it was common that a couple lived together before getting married to verify their decision. Virginity was important, but it was not strictly related to the concepts of honour and purity that had developed after the conquest.⁴⁹ Therefore, this may be an aspect of colonisation that had penetrated indigenous communities.

Finally, it is interesting to note how the abandoned woman normally sought her mother for support and understanding, suggesting the existence of female solidarity within the family. The mother often helped her daughter claim financial compensation. At the same time, looking for a way to solve the trouble without the intervention of the judge, the man would recommend that the affected woman say nothing to her mother.

⁴⁸ AHAM, Box 1755-56, “Bernabela Antonia, natural y tributaria de S. Barbara Xolalpa, acusa a un vecino por haberles quitado la reputación de doncellas a gritos en la plaza pública”.

⁴⁹ Rodríguez, “La mujer y la familia”, pp. 16-7; McCaa, “Tratos nupciales”, pp. 26-7.

The importance of the role played by the mother becomes evident when it is considered that at least half of the women deceived with a promise of marriage had lost their fathers. This may lead one to speculate about the possibility that, without protection of the male head of the family, these young females were easy targets for treachery.⁵⁰

Mistreatment

In 1754 Juana Polonia, of the district of Santa Clara (jurisdiction of Toluca) went to the *juez eclesiástico* to denounce that her husband mistreated her: “me cogió de los cabellos y me arrastró, y después me dio tantas mordidas las que demuestro patentes en ambos brazos.”⁵¹ After that, Esteban de Guadalupe disappeared for a fortnight and the woman discovered he had a lover. Finally, the man was arrested and while in jail protested his innocence and claimed that his wife had accused him in order to free herself from his presence and live in sin. The proof of what he declared was that while he was in prison she did not care for him, bring him food, or even visit him there. This case is only an example of an event that appeared to be very common in women’s life.⁵² The *Juzgado* of Toluca examined twelve lawsuits on mistreatment during the early eighteenth century.⁵³ Of them, seven were initiated by accusations made by the

⁵⁰ The help given by the mother to her needy daughter seems to support the idea of a network of strong relationships among native women, as it has been introduced by Elinor Burkett in her study on Peru. The existence of this network is underlined in other sections of the present chapter, as in the following one on mistreatment. See: Elinor C. Burkett, “Indian Women and White Society: the Case of Sixteenth Century Peru”, in *Latin American Women*, p. 121.

⁵¹ AHAM, Box 1754-55, “Juana Polonia, india del barrio de Santa Clara, contra Esteban de Guadalupe su esposo”.

⁵² There are numerous examples of the extension of the phenomenon, here we consider: Lisa Sousa, “Women and Crime in Colonial Oaxaca”, and Deeds, “Double Jeopardy”, both in *Indian Women*, pp. 204-7 and 262-3 respectively.

⁵³ The other cases here considered for mistreatment come from the AHAM: Box 1752, “Autos promovidos por solicitud de Mauricio Antonio indio natural casado con Isidra Juana”; Box 1750(2), “Manuela de la Asunción contra de su marido Juan Gonzales por malos tratos”; Box 1752, “Fechos por pedimento de Simona Tadea contra Gregorio Antonio, su marido, ambos de esta jurisdicción”; Box 1750(2), “Causa seguida contra Mariana, mujer legítima de Lucas Antonio, vecinos del barrio de Santa Barbara”; Box 1750(2), “Angela María, vecina de la ciudad, acusa a Pedro Pablo por maltratar a su nieta”; Box 1755-56, “José Baltazar viudo demanda el maltrato que se le da a su hija”; Box 1753, “Hechos de pedimento de María Gertrudis, india natural y vecina de esta ciudad al barrio de S. Miguel Aticpac contra Marco Tadeo”; Box 1753, “Autos hechos de pedimento de Lucas Antonio indio y vecino de la doctrina de Metepec”. Three more cases were found in the AGN: AGNcr 1723, vol. 217, exp. 10, “Malos tratos; acusado, Juan Tomás; afectada, Angelina María; San Mateo Atengo”; AGNcr 1765, vol.

female victims themselves; in two other cases the mother and the grandmother of the victim called for the judge's intervention, and only in three cases was the process initiated by the father as head of the family. This suggests that most of the time in these cases women took the initiative.

Considering the behaviour of the husband, what is astonishing is the level of violence perpetrated. Despite the fact that in the colonial period physical punishment was common among all social groups and that judicial power used and abused it, the descriptions of mistreatment endured by these women were often extreme. Insults and threats with a knife were the least intimidating, even if they could get extremely offensive, as occurred to María Gertrudis, of the district of San Miguel Aticpac (jurisdiction of Toluca), whose husband shouted that providing food for her "era como estar engordando a un marrano."⁵⁴ However, in most cases words went together with whipping and *garrotazos* that left broken skulls, scars, and the less visible but deeper marks of terror, as in the declaration of Mariana, of the district of Santa Barbara: "Me amarró las manos y me pasó el pie en el pescuezo para ahogarme, pues quiero más antes padecer en un depósito que no estar con él por el temor que llevo de que me pueda dar un golpe."⁵⁵

It is now necessary to consider what the cases of mistreatment reveal about women's reaction to the feminine model imposed by the Catholic Church. First, it should be evident from the number of accusations presented directly by female victims that women did not accept passively the role of submissive wives. Normally, they reacted after enduring various mistreatments and after many years of marriage, but it is important to stress that they did it, and particularly that they did not wait for the males of their family to do it on their behalf. This attitude is different from the obedience and submissiveness required by the Church, and also from the general passivity noticed by Susan Kellogg among the indigenous women of Mexico City.⁵⁶ Clearly, it cannot be

148, exp. 7, "Calumnias; acusada, Juana Isabel; afectado, Casimiro Miguel"; AGNCr 1701, vol. 137, exp. 12, "Sevicia; acusado: Juan de Santiago; afectada: Sebastiana María".

⁵⁴ AHAM, Box 1753, "Hechos de pedimento de María Gertrudis".

⁵⁵ AHAM, Box 1750(2), "Causa seguida contra Mariana".

⁵⁶ This is one of the main points of the conclusions reached through her research in the urban setting; see Kellogg, *Law*, *passim*.

argued that the twelve cases of the Toluca Valley prove that the situation was different in rural areas. However, they reveal an interesting reaction, especially if it is considered that the cases of accusation for mistreatment presented by a man in defence of a woman were very few, and that the decision to denounce a husband put a wife in a very dangerous position. For less than an accusation before colonial authorities a man's rage could find an expression as violent as killing the woman, as Steve Stern has reported in his research on everyday violence against women in rural Mexico.⁵⁷

Another interesting aspect of the cases concerns the justification given by the husband once he was questioned by the judge. Most of the men declared it had been necessary to beat their wives because they had not fulfilled their duties, that is to cook, take care of the clothes and the house, and be faithful. In practice, the woman did not conform to the model of a Christian wife that the Church imposed, so that the husband had no option, "le hubo de dar unos cuantos golpes" to make her understand.⁵⁸ When men admitted their violence, they always tried to minimise it, and in no case did they acknowledge the gravity of the accusation, or perceive that they had done wrong. Therefore, according to the explanations provided, the woman was in error and she needed to be corrected. However, a deeper analysis of the facts leads to a different conclusion. In most cases, by the end it had become clear that the husband had a relationship with a lover and that the wife suspected something; beating her was a form, successful or not, of trying to avoid her interference. So that, while the Church considered the woman as fragile, prone to temptation and in need of man's authority, and the husband justified himself saying that the punishment saved her from sin, reality showed how often the man was the one who had broken the marriage vows.

It is worth noticing that the Church and the importance attributed to Christian marriage had a strong influence in most of the cases. Where the final decision of the judge is known, it can be said that there was always an effort to reunite the couple, often after a

⁵⁷ On violence against women in the Mexican rural areas during colonial time, see Stern, *Secret History*, *passim*; see also Pescador, "Entre la espada y el olivo", pp. 220-1.

⁵⁸ The quotation is from AHAM, Box 1754-55, "Juana Polonia, india". Basically, the reasons for violence against women were gender rooted; they depended on sexual claims or on non-sexual aspects of gender relations as the duties a woman was normally expected to fulfil (Stern, *Secret History*, p. 79).

recommendation to the husband not to be so aggressive. The main objective was to save the marriage. However, it is evident that in very difficult circumstances the woman did not easily accept the Christian principle of acquiescence to save her marriage. On the contrary, in one case a woman declared that her husband first neglected the sacred vow “faltando a su obligación y al estado santo del matrimonio”⁵⁹, so that in her opinion the marriage itself had lost its meaning. The disdain of the principle of submission is clearly visible from the fact that in most cases the woman left her husband’s house, finding shelter at her parents’ or a female relative’s house. This detail is very interesting, for it reveals a tendency that appears in other situations as well. When enduring extreme difficulty, as in the case of mistreatment, the woman turned to her family for support, particularly to her mother or a female relative. It seems that there was a net of solidarity among women of the same family group, a system of support that was activated in case of emergency and that was an important resource of native women in facing the difficult moments in their everyday life.

PART III: WOMEN’S PERCEPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Married Women

Apart from the issue of mistreatment already considered, this section will examine the general perception that native women had of their marriage and the role of their husbands. Once native women were married, they normally conformed to the role that the Church expected of them within their new family. As already seen, women often depended on their husbands for sustenance and protection. There are some examples of women asking for their husband’s intervention to protect them against violence and to denounce an abuse. Such a situation occurred in 1744 to Gregoria María, who was assaulted by Mateo de la Cruz on her way to collect some magueyes. He tried to rape

On this topic, see as well Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, “La violencia dentro de las familias formal e informal”, in *Familia y vida privada*, pp. 328-33.

⁵⁹ AHAM, Box 1753, “Hechos de pedimento de María Gertrudis”.

her, but she resisted, so he wounded her on the face with a knife. She ran home to her husband Nicolás, who denounced Mateo to the authorities. Or again, in 1767 José Miguel de Escobar reported that his wife Tomasa Cristina was being harassed by Antonio Hilario, the governor of the pueblo.⁶⁰ She had already told her husband before they got married that she had had a relationship with Antonio in the past, but the latter tried to force her to continue with it after her marriage, taking advantage of his official position. Tomasa did not know how to deal with it, so she turned to her husband, who denounced Antonio to the judge in Toluca.⁶¹

Another situation in which the dependent position of the woman was visible was when her husband was accused of having relationships outside marriage. As a result of such an offence, the man was normally put into jail or condemned to exile for a few years. In no case did the woman deny the accusation made against her husband, even if sometimes she requested more evidence since it was regarded as a very serious matter. But always she underlined how the decision to imprison or exile her husband disadvantaged her first, since she was left alone to take care of the whole family. This was evident in Juana de la Encarnación's words: "soi perjudicada por la falta que me hace dicho mi marido, para cuidar una casa y milpas".⁶² Such cases suggest that women were basically dependent on men for those activities that concerned the maintenance of the house and work in the fields. Their declarations contain nothing about the pain they felt for being betrayed, rather they seemed to concentrate on the practical effects of their husband's crime, and the fact that they did not try to deny the accusation leads us to suppose that such a situation was considered quite normal.⁶³ The

⁶⁰ Within the indigenous context, as will be shown in Chapters Four and Five, this person would doubtless have had the title *don*, a normal prerogative of the governorship, but Spanish clerks often omitted the title in Spanish records.

⁶¹ The two cases are: AGNCR 1744, vol. 122, exp. 9, ff. 275-89, "Lesiones, acusado: Mateo de la Cruz, afectada: Gregoria María"; and AHAM, Box 1767-68, "Denuncia de José Miguel de Escobar indio por ser hostigado por el gobernador del pueblo, Antonio Ilario indio, quien solicita a la esposa del primero, Tomasa Cristina, india principal".

⁶² AHAM, Box 1741-42, "Autos ejecutorios por violaciones". The other cases here considered are: AHAM, Box 1754, "De oficio de la justicia eclesiástica de esta ciudad contra Juan de la Cruz indio casado con María Josefa por incontinencia con Rita de Quiroz"; AHAM, Box 1745-47, "Criminales, Miguel Cayetano indio de Calimaya contra Rosa María"; AGNCR 1744, vol. 122, exp. 9, ff. 275-89, "Lesiones, acusado: Mateo de la Cruz, afectada: Gregoria María".

⁶³ One could take the position that, in their reaction, they were being a model Christian wife. The general acceptance of male adultery as a common behaviour is considered also by Silvia Arrom, who underlined how adultery was not a cause of divorce, even if it provoked female reaction; normally

declaration of Mateo de la Cruz's wife is indicative in this respect: "no he hecho ninguna ofensa a Dios Nuestro Señor para mantenerme, no ha de permitir VM en justicia lo haga yo en lo de adelante [...], por que si es que hizo mi marido el adulterio no es milagro, ni cosa nueva, que la mas culpa tiene y ha tenido su mujer por haverme hecho a mí también adulterio".⁶⁴ Not only did the woman show no surprise at all at her husband's adultery, but also accused her husband's lover since as women, they were in similar conditions and she should have thought about that before betraying her.

Despite the dependence by the women in the cases above, there were many situations in which there is evidence that they conceived of their marriage as a relation in which they could be protagonists, and not only put up with their husband's behaviour. A curious example to start with is the declaration of Sebastián Tadeo, of San Mateo Ostotitlan, husband of Tomasa María. He said his wife was causing him a lot of pain "por querer tenerme y tratarme como si fuera criado o sirviente suyo y que le de lo que no alcanzo con mi trabajo".⁶⁵ He used some expressions that could have sounded normal in a wife's mouth, stressing the unexpected strong temper of Tomasa María. In addition, various cases have been found in which the wife left the house repeatedly, apparently with no reason according to her husband, just being angry or wanting to stay with her mother.⁶⁶

However, the situation in which a married woman demonstrated the strongest intention of living her marriage according to her own rules was in the case of adultery. Only four cases were presented to the *Juzgado* of Toluca, which was under half those initiated by men (for an illustration of the lawsuit, see Figure 6). However, they reveal

women plead for divorce in case of physical abuse or failure to provide maintenance, but not for adultery. See Arrom, *Women*, pp. 232-42.

⁶⁴ AGNCR 1744, vol. 122, exp. 9, ff. 275-89, "Lesiones, acusado: Mateo de la Cruz, afectada: Gregoria María". The expression "su mujer" reveals that her husband's lover was also married.

⁶⁵ AHAM, Box 1762, "Diligencias ejecutadas a pedimento de Sebastian Tadeo, indio del pueblo de San Mateo Ostotitlan".

⁶⁶ AHAM, Box 1747, "Elzeario de la Cruz contra María Pascuala su esposa"; AGNCR 1765, vol. 148, exp. 7, ff. 81-6, "Calumnias; acusada Juana Isabel, afectado Casimiro Miguel"; AHAM, Box 1750(2), "Juan Elzeario marido de Augustina Josefa pide que regrese su mujer a la casa". It has to be remembered that in all cases of mistreatment the woman left the house, taking shelter at her parents' or a female relative's.

another arena in which native women were active.⁶⁷ In three cases out of four it seemed that the woman met her lover inside her own house, taking advantage of the time when her husband was out at work, or even when he was asleep. She was thus using the home, the space that was traditionally assigned to her, particularly the kitchen or the oratory, that is the main buildings of the house complex, as will be explained in Chapter Four. Once her illicit relationship was discovered, she could usually count on her family's support since her parents were always ready to shelter her, once again demonstrating the existence of a family network. Sometimes she was also backed by her lover's family. When she had children, she always tried to take them with her if she left her husband's house, but normally the man claimed custody and as a result they became the objects of a dispute.

From the cases analysed we know that a woman accused of adultery was put in *depósito* for the duration of the lawsuit and even afterwards if she was proved guilty, but no evidence of the sentence has been found to describe the kind of punishment she was given. Putting a woman in *depósito* meant that she was given in custody to an honourable family, who had to control her behaviour for an established period of time. During early colonial times, the *depósito* developed essentially as a form of protection that priests used to safeguard women before marriage, since it was common that indigenous couples started living together before the actual wedding took place. Normally the woman was placed in the parish priest's house, so that she was kept directly under his control. However, during the eighteenth century it was more frequently employed as a form of punishment, being applied to those women who showed unconformity with Church rules, especially in sexual matters. In fact, the cases found in the present corpus concern adulterous women, or women who lived in unions outside marriage, as will be discussed below. These findings are in agreement with the study carried out by Deborah Kanter, according to which *depósito* in the

⁶⁷ AHAM, Box 1766(1), "Jacinto Nicolás del pueblo de San Lorenzo doctrina de Calimaya contra su esposa y Bentura Diego por incontinencia"; Box 1759(2), "Juan de Santillan, natural y vecino del pueblo de Nuestra Señora de Santa Anna denuncia el comportamiento de su esposa Isidra María y Pedro Eligio"; Box 1754-55, "Autos hechos a pedimento de Ambrosio Hipolito contra Bernardo Nicolás y Petra Angelina, sobre adulterio"; Box 1753, "Autos hechos de pedimento de Lucas Antonio indio y vecino de la doctrina de Metepec de esta jurisdicción contra Mariana Antonia su mujer de la misma calidad sobre adulterio".

eighteenth century was used to punish especially those women who lived alone and acted autonomously, breaking the rule of submissiveness to husbands and authorities.⁶⁸ In practice, it was generally seen as a chance for repentance and instruction in Christian doctrine to redeem sinful conduct. A last detail that is worth mention, is that that by the eighteenth century women who were sentenced to *depósito* tended to be put in custody in honourable families' houses instead of the priest's house. We have seen in Chapter Two that archbishops insisted particularly on this, since it had aroused much suspicion against the local clergy, if not always of personal abuse, then at least of exploitation of female labour.

As for the husband, his first reaction to adultery was usually to portray the woman in a bad light by stressing her disregard in using their house to conduct her affairs, or her negligence towards the children, "encontrando la criatura de pecho sola y descuidada."⁶⁹ Sometimes, the man even used some expressions that were reminiscent of the typical way women defended themselves in front of the authorities, as in Jacinto Nicolás' words: "me ha de ver con ojos de piedad que soy un pobrecito no tengo padre ni madre."⁷⁰ However, apart from harsh words, the husband was normally willing to pardon his wife's weakness and ready to take her back home after having been in custody; in two of the four cases wives were taken back, but in the other two cases the woman decided to flee with her lover.

Unmarried Women

Those native women who were not married also played an active role within relationships with their partners even if a legal union was lacking. This situation was called *incontinencia* in Spanish, that is an informal union. In all the cases previously considered under broken promises of marriage the couple had lived together for a

⁶⁸ On *depósito*, see Kanter, "Hijos del pueblo", pp. 296-9, 302-4, 311-4. Her study also covers the cases in which this kind of custody was used by civil authorities; for full references see pp. 295-321.

⁶⁹ AHAM, Box 1759(2), "Juan de Santillan, natural y vecino del pueblo de Nuestra Señora de Santa Anna denuncia el comportamiento de su esposa Isidra María y Pedro Eligio".

⁷⁰ AHAM, Box 1766(1), "Jacinto Nicolás del pueblo de San Lorenzo doctrina de Calimaya contra su esposa y Bentura Diego por incontinencia".

certain period of time. In addition another twelve cases that did not involve marriage were found in the documentation of the Valley of Toluca.⁷¹ This suggests that this kind of union outside marriage was fairly widespread in indigenous society at the time.

Native women of any age and condition might be found in this kind of relation. Some of them were young inexperienced women, such as María and María Gertrudis, who had grown up in Spanish houses since they had been abandoned.⁷² Two young boys, Josef Jiménez and Josef Cuenca respectively, convinced them to leave their houses and live with them. Some others were widows or adult women who did not want to conform to the rules of a formal Catholic marriage. Like María Rufina, who declared in 1762 that “sólo la incontinencia los llevó”⁷³, a woman might not think about marriage or have any claim to make on her lover. Or the needs of everyday life put pressure on them, as happened to Juliana María in 1754, when she admitted that “como fragil y miserable muger se fue con él porque la mantenía a ella y sus dos hijos.”⁷⁴ In three cases, these women had already had relationships with other men before the one that led them in front of the judge. This could be dangerous because they risked their reputations, they could be considered as “muger(es) mundana(s)” and could lose any possibility of receiving some money from their lover or of getting married. This was articulated clearly in Anselmo José’s words, who said he did not

⁷¹ See the section on broken promises of marriage. The cases here considered come from the AHAM: Box 1766(2), “Comparencia de Anselmo José indio soltero sobre la conducta de Rosalia, india soltera”; Box 1751(1), “Los seguidos de oficio de la justicia eclesiástica de esta ciudad del Señor S. José de Toluca contra Pedro de Cuenca y Margarita Bernal, vecinos de Tlacotepec”; Box 1751(1), “De oficio de la justicia eclesiástica de la ciudad de S. José de Toluca contra Manuel Zamudio y Simona Valdes”; Box 1718, “Auto que se sigue contra Clemente Santiago por incurrir en delitos carnales”; Box 1729, “José Ortiz acusa a mozo español llamado José Jiménes por inquietar a la María, india que crió”; Box 1756, “Criminales contra José Cuenca sobre haberse llevado a María Gertrudis, india”; Box 1754, “Autos hechos en virtud de denuncia, hecha en este Juzgado contra Juan Domingo de la Cruz indio vecino de San Bartolomé por el amancebamiento de nueve años con Juliana María”; Box 1753, “Sobre huida de Antonia de la Cruz acusada de incontinencia”; Box 1762, “Hechos de Inés Antonia de Cuenca como madre de María Rufina contra Bernabé Pichardo por extraerle su hija de la casa”; Box 1760, “Diligencias hechas de oficio contra Joaquín Lazaro Pichardo sobre la incontinencia con Gregoria María”; Box 1764, “Expediente sobre incontinencia y vida mundana de Rosalia india”; Box 1760, “Autos hechos en virtud de denuncia contra Pascuala María y Antonio, sobre incontinencia”.

⁷² AHAM, Box 1729, “José Ortiz acusa a mozo español llamado José Jiménes por inquietar a la María, india que crió”; Box 1756, “Criminales contra José Cuenca sobre haberse llevado a María Gertrudis”.

⁷³ AHAM, Box 1762, “Hechos de Inés Antonia de Cuenca como madre de María Rufina contra Bernabé Pichardo por extraerle su hija de la casa”.

⁷⁴ AHAM, Box 1754, “Autos hechos en virtud de denuncia, hecha en este Juzgado contra Juan Domingo de la Cruz indio vecino de San Bartolomé por el amancebamiento de nueve años con Juliana María”.

want “contraer matrimonio con una muger común, que ciertamente me pusiera en una hirrimediable y conocida perdición.”⁷⁵

A native woman caught in an illicit relationship was to be put in custody in the house of an honourable citizen for some time, until her position could be regularised. In most of the cases, women finally got married or they broke up their relationships, but in some cases women protested against the authorities’ decision by fleeing from the *depósito* and going into hiding. Only two of the cases here presented for informal union ended this way, but it is important to stress that it was a weapon of resistance that women knew and could employ.⁷⁶ For example, Simona Valdés, of Toluca, was sentenced to custody in 1751 when her union with Manuel Zamudio was discovered.⁷⁷ After a few months she asked to be put in someone else’s custody, “siéndome intolerable el aguante en el dicho depósito, respecto al trabajo que en él erogo, y otras molestias”. Her *depósito* was changed twice, and finally she found the chance to flee and the judge lost trace of her. Her flight can be considered an extreme form of expressing her disagreement with the authorities and of her will not to submit to the sentence.

Many times women did not accept peacefully impositions on their future, claiming their freedom and possibility of choice. Two cases have been chosen as examples, those of Pascuala María and of Margarita Bernal. Pascuala María lived in the pueblo of San Bernardino, jurisdiction of Toluca. She was a widow with four children and she was denounced to the *Juzgado* in 1760 since “dando mal exemplo a todos los del pueblo allase amanebada, y para la constancia y verdad de esta denuncia, en vispera de Noche Buena parió una hija.”⁷⁸ Possibly many women lived in a similar situation since informal relationships were a quite normal practice, as stated above. However,

⁷⁵ AHAM, Box 1766(2), “Comparencia de Anselmo José indio soltero sobre la conducta de Rosalia, india soltera”.

⁷⁶ Usually a woman’s flight in such situation created scandal and gossip at the same time. This can be an example in which some of the ‘female weapons’ analysed by Steve Stern were applied (see Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 98-110, 142-4).

⁷⁷ AHAM, Box 1751(1), “De oficio de la justicia eclesiástica de la ciudad de S. José de Toluca contra Manuel Zamudio y Simona Valdes”.

⁷⁸ AHAM, Box 1760, “Autos hechos en virtud de denuncia contra Pascuala María y Antonio, sobre incontinencia”.

what made Pascuala's situation a dangerous scandal for the community was that she did not hide her status; on the contrary, she lived it in an open way: "ella es tlachiquera y rica, y con el motibo de tener dinero, quiere vivir sin temor de Dios." The term *tlachiquera* tells us that she harvested magueyes, and this activity (which will be discussed in Chapter Five) gave her some economic independence and in all likelihood also freedom in her behaviour vis-à-vis relationships.⁷⁹ In fact, when she was brought before the judge, she declared she had lived for a time with a man named Antonio, of whom she did not remember any other name or his pueblo of origin. After she became pregnant, he disappeared, so she did not intend to continue the relationship, and even less marry him. She affirmed that what she did was nothing wrong since "era con hombre libre como yo". This was a clear statement of freedom of choice for her life and resistance to the model of Christian marriage. The judge ordered her sequestration, and after approximately a month Pascuala María abandoned her proud posture. The needs of her family changed her attitude, and she asked the judge to be set free with the guarantee that she would attend to her children.

Nine years before the *Juzgado* of Toluca had to face another insubordinate woman, Margarita Bernal, of Tlacotepec (jurisdiction of Metepec), accused of an informal relation with Pedro de Cuenca.⁸⁰ The constable of the court went to her house together with the notary but she was not there; the neighbours said she would be in Toluca, where she went every Friday to sell pulque at the fair. In fact, they found her there, in the middle of the square, and they tried to bring her before the judge. If they expected to deal with a scared and subdued woman, accustomed to obeying men and authority, they must have been astonished: Margarita "comenzó a resistirse con altas y denigrativas voces en agravio de su merced y sus ministros." She caught people's attention so that the officials could not arrest her without causing a public reaction. Witnesses declared to the judge that she resisted fiercely, crying that the authorities did nothing but rob native women, that if they did it "por hambre que se fueren a su

⁷⁹ *Tlachiquera* is a hybrid word of Nahuatl and Spanish, meaning 'one who harvests magueyes'; in fact, it comes from the Nahuatl verb *ichiqui*, to scrape, plus a Spanish ending.

⁸⁰ AHAM, Box 1751(1), "Los seguidos de oficio de la justicia eclesiástica de esta ciudad del Señor S. José de Toluca contra Pedro de Cuenca y Margarita Bernal, vecinos de Tlacotepec".

casa y comieran”, that she was not like the other women, she was not scared at all. A man clearly heard her saying:

“que ella era muy señora india por una razón; no tenía el señor juez rabo por donde le pisara; porque su merced estaba echo a comer del culo de las indias de Tlacotepec, y que de ella no había de comer; y que eran así, el señor juez como sus ministros unos hambrientos y tan ladrones, unos como otros, que así como andaba la cabeza andaban los pies, que se pondría en México y los probaría a todos, que para eso tenía dinero y que no era tonta”.

The words she used to attack the authorities were very strong and aggressive, revealing a consciousness of native women’s position and an admirable courage to react against abuses. Despite her protests, the officials carried out their mission, waiting for her until the fair ended. When people were leaving, they dragged her before the judge, who ordered her sequestration and charged her with an informal relationship and slander. Unfortunately, bravery and strong reaction had to face the reality of the needs and limits of a woman’s everyday life: after some days in custody, she asked that “por amor de Dios” she could be pardoned “en consideración de estar mi casa sola y en ella gravemente accidentada una hija mía.” She needed to go back to her activities and the care of her family, so that her ardent affirmation of a native female independence and response to abuses was converted into an attempt to justify her behaviour by the confusion caused by some pulque “que a expensas del sol tomé y como no acostumbrada me hizo el efecto que no advertí.” Finally, the judge set her free, recommending that she marry Pedro in order to end her informal relationship.

The outcome of these two stories provides evidence of the limits of the possibilities for native women who wished to affirm an independent position. Nevertheless, Pascuala María and Margarita Bernal are examples of the resistance women could offer to the model of woman proposed by the Catholic Church, showing in the most unmistakable terms that they did not comply with it.

THE 'MATRIMONIO SIMBÓLICO' IN THE INDIGENOUS WORLD

In view of the cases analysed above, some general considerations are appropriate concerning the application of the Christian model of woman and marriage in the indigenous context of the Toluca Valley. On one side of the picture is the Church, attempting to impose the conception of marriage as sacred and monogamous, a reflection of the divine love. Ecclesiastical authorities reacted, often in a harsh way, to the violations of these principles. The punishment they ordered included the enforced practice of the sacraments, and attendance at mass and the sermons of the priest, always taking the church building as a point of reference for expiation. Indeed, the penance normally had to be carried out inside the church, often in front of the whole congregation as a practical lesson in Christian doctrine. The church building became then the central locus of the application of the orthodox Christian model of life and redemption. As we have seen, ecclesiastical authorities could get so worried that they would mete out sentences involving severe punishment, as in the case of polygamy. What happened to María Josefa shows the great concern of the Church for this sin, which expressed the worst disdain for the Christian conception of marriage, worse than informal union or adultery.

The severity of the Church clashed with a Spanish colonial society that often disregarded the norms, so no better compliance could be expected from the Indians. Indeed, according to the records for Mexico City, it seems that severe punishment was not enough to convince the Indians to fully adopt the strict Christian model. Despite the Church's prohibition, some polygamy continued to be practised, but more than that, informal unions seem to have been a widespread custom, and adultery was not at all uncommon.⁸¹ As far as rural areas such as the Toluca Valley are concerned, we have mentioned that the lowest rate of illegitimacy was recorded among indigenous communities, showing a certain level of compliance with the norms of Christian marriage. However, a small number of cases of adultery, polygamy and especially

⁸¹ McCaa, "Marriageways", pp. 24-7; Arrom, *Women*, pp. 150-2, 245; Pescador, "Vanishing Woman", pp. 620-4; Juan Javier Pescador, *De bautizados a fieles difuntos: familia y mentalidades en una parroquia urbana, Santa Catarina de México, 1568-1820* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992), pp. 145-9.

informal unions have been found in the documentation and their presence is significant. All these behaviours were defined as beyond the norms of Christian conduct, and their existence suggests that the Church's version of the Christian model of woman and marriage had not been totally accepted by indigenous people. As just mentioned, it had not been totally accepted by Spaniards either, and the similar reactions of the two groups could be seen as evidence that Spanish society in general had as great an impact on the shape of relationships in indigenous society as the teaching of the Church. It is also possible, of course, that much of indigenous behaviour was due not to Spanish influence but to the continuation of older indigenous traditions. Nevertheless, the cases of promises of marriage and mistreatment reveal an indigenous woman who probably did not please ecclesiastical authorities. Distancing herself from the generally passive stance everybody expected from her, a woman often revealed herself to be active and practical, reacting to the difficulties everyday life presented and struggling to maintain herself. Many times she did not follow the principle of obedience and submissiveness that relegated her to a silent and quiet role inside Christian marriage. On the contrary, she often turned upside down the Church's and men's traditional vision of a woman as weak, prone to temptation, irrational and needing guidance.

However, it would be naive to think that the Christian model of woman had no impact on Nahua women's life. In fact, in many subtle ways it penetrated inside family life and relationships. One example appears to be the growing importance that honour acquired in the indigenous society, or again the changes in marriage practices in terms of increased independence of the couple from the community. Moreover, women's dependence on their husbands or partners for sustenance and help with agricultural activities is evident in many cases. Sometimes, women had to resort to their husband's help to face other men's violence and abuse. These situations are consistent with the form of subordination of women to men that was preached by the Church. On top of that, women constantly had to confront with the limits set for them by their everyday life. As we saw, even in the cases of very determined women, like Margarita Bernal or Pascuala María, the necessity of looking after the house and the children drew them back to the household. However, in the end these could be seen as practical limits,

linked to everyday bare necessities, as in the case of dependence on men for sustenance. Practical matters may have curbed native women's protest, but they could not totally hide their free spirit and determination not to remain silent in the face of the abuses that many Nahua women experienced.

Women showed their ability to react through the network of solidarity that seemed to exist among women of the same family and also in some cases of the same community. Often women in need found in this network a valuable support in facing difficult moments of their everyday life. Some further hints of the phenomenon will be found in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Household: Terminology and Social Practices

The chapter aims to present a view of the position of native women inside their household, their relationships with the other members, and some of the social practices generated within the household context. In order to evaluate the persistence of indigenous customs and the penetration of Spanish cultural influence the documents here employed are primarily Nahuatl testaments. The use of Nahuatl sources in studying the indigenous people of central Mexico allows us to take an internal perspective of the process, from within the indigenous society itself. Moreover, Nahuatl materials vary greatly with time and place, so that the analysis of a corpus coming from a particular area reveals words and traits specific to the situation being studied in a way not possible with Spanish sources. However, these sources do have the disadvantage of their small number compared to the corpus of Spanish sources on colonial Mexico. Also, they usually appear in dossiers in Spanish, dossiers that have to be used to reconstruct a broader context. The hope is that an approach can be developed through which both Spanish and Nahuatl materials can be used together, achieving greater reliability and additional dimensions.¹

Nahuatl testaments follow the general lines of the model established by Spanish testaments, since issuing a written document with one's last wishes was not an indigenous tradition.² However, they have many aspects which are particular to the Nahuas, including a special rhetoric and a distinct vocabulary for relationships, bequests, and properties of various kinds. Their content is so deeply rooted in the

¹ Testaments in Nahuatl have been scarcely begun to be exploited for research on cultural and social aspects of Nahua society in colonial times; as a consequence there are not many publications that can be used as a guide or for comparison. For the present chapter, the following works have been consulted: Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 59-202; Stephanie Wood, "Matters of Life", pp. 165-82; S. L. Cline and Miguel León-Portilla (eds.), *The Testaments of Culhuacan* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1984); Kellogg, *Law*, pp. 121-59; Cline, *Colonial Culhuacan*. See also the article of Susan Kellogg, "Aztec Inheritance in 16th Century Mexico City: Colonial Patterns, Prehispanic Influences", *Ethnohistory* 33(3) (1986), pp. 313-30.

² No evidence has been found of the practice of issuing a testament among the ancient Nahuas. Scholars who have studied Nahuatl wills most closely think that the Nahuas might have had some form of oral testamentary institution, but not with the terms and mechanisms specific to the European tradition of testaments. On this point see: Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, pp. 3-4.

indigenous reality that they are excellent instruments to explore the Nahua world. They normally have a preamble with some Christian formula, followed by the testator's self-introduction, and then the main corpus with dispositions concerning burial, funeral, and property. At the end there is some mention of the executor and the witnesses who are called upon to certify the document. Testaments were normally issued in case of life-threatening illness or other serious danger; that is, when a person felt that death was approaching. As a consequence the testator tended to give a portrait of her/his everyday world as it was at that very moment, as well as dictating the way in which she/he wished things to be settled. It is precisely through the details that a testator gives, almost unwittingly, about herself/himself and those members of the family who are involved in bequests or in carrying out various duties, that valuable information can be obtained on women's roles within the family group. However, since the purpose of a testament is not to describe a family situation in detail, it may be that the information given is not complete; members of the family can be left out if not inheriting anything, or the property mentioned may be only a small part of the property of a household, being all that the testator personally owns. A more complete general picture can be obtained by the method used in this study, accumulating a corpus of testaments and systematically examining them for the presence or absence of a number of specific characteristics.

Another aspect that needs to be taken into account is that testaments have the primary purposes of transmitting property and making funeral arrangements; as a consequence it can be expected that those with more property would have a greater motivation to issue a will. Indeed, some persons both male and female in the present corpus prove to have been very wealthy by indigenous standards. However, others had much less, and many had only one building for a residence and one small field. Others possessed even less and had the will issued for funeral arrangements alone. As a consequence, it can be said that in the corpus all ranks are represented, and both genders as well, since female testators, though fewer than male, are numerous nonetheless.

The corpus here considered is made up of 30 wills of women living in the Toluca Valley, thirteen of them coming from the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de

México, and seventeen from the Archivo General de la Nación. In addition, some testaments of men have been analysed to broaden the perspective and collect more details on women; the men's wills include nineteen from the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado plus nineteen from the Archivo General, making 38.³ The chapter is divided into two parts; the first deals with terminology and names related to women and the second tackles some social practices that emerge from the study of testaments. More specifically, Part I presents an analysis of women's status in relation to marriage, followed by some considerations on female kinship terminology beyond marriage, and finally a section on naming patterns. Part II first portrays women's inheritance practices, and second discusses other relevant social practices such as the custodial function of women and how they used executors.

Parts of the chapter thus involve the close inspection of Nahuatl words designating status and relationships, and some of the conclusions throw light on the degree of change experienced in the Toluca Valley in the eighteenth century as compared with earlier centuries. Changes in the Nahuatl language after the Spanish conquest (and much other cultural change among the Nahuas) are considered to have occurred in three large consecutive waves or stages.⁴ At times in my analysis I will speak of Stage 1 (to about 1540 or 1545), the first postconquest generation, during which the Nahuatl language hardly changed. In Stage 2 (from then until the middle of the seventeenth century), Nahuatl took a myriad of words from Spanish, but mainly nouns, while other

³ The testaments in the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México were found by the author; they form part of the documentation of the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca. The testaments in the Archivo General de la Nación belong to three branches (Tierras, Civil, Hospital de Jesus) and have been kindly provided by Stephanie Wood (28 items) and James Lockhart (7). The author has produced the majority of the transcriptions in conjunction with James Lockhart, some having been done by Stephanie Wood, and all the translations, with the aid of James Lockhart. Finally, a testament from the AGN has been published in the collection of Teresa Rojas Rabiela, *Vidas y bienes olvidados. Testamentos indígenas novohispanos* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2000), vol. 3, pp. 398-403. As far as the testaments from the AHAM are concerned, I will use the description under which they have been found in the archive, using inverted commas; instead, for the documents coming from the AGN, testaments will be referred to without inverted commas, since they are normally part of larger dossiers, and the descriptions are my own.

⁴ The three stages were first expounded in Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, *Nahuatl in the Middle Years* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), and developed further in Lockhart, *The Nahuas*. In Lockhart, *Things* (p. 209), the cultural implications of the stages are succinctly summarised, calling Stage 1 a generation of little cultural change; Stage 2 a hundred years when change affected predominantly corporations, and Hispanic elements entered Nahua frameworks as discrete items; and Stage 3 a time of personal interpenetration of the two societies, with more intimate, structure-altering change.

aspects of the language were unaffected. Finally, during Stage 3 (from then on, including the time investigated here) Nahuatl took words other than nouns, created equivalences between Nahuatl and Spanish words, and added Spanish sounds to its phonology. Bearing in mind these stages will assist in putting some cultural developments in a larger context.

PART I: WORDS FOR WOMEN

Since the ascribed status of women and the set of terms used to describe them have been hardly studied, it might seem that such an approach would be peripheral to the question of their position within the family and household. In fact, examination of the terminology used is one of our best tools in understanding the relative positions of family members, how those positions were conceived, and the continuities and changes they experienced during the postconquest period. Part I deals first with words used to describe women in relation to marriage, then words used for all their other kinship relations, and finally how they were named within the overall naming system.

Women's Status in Relation to Marriage

One of the first things that requires attention in the analysis of women's wills is whether they were married, widows, or never married. The terms used reveal women's basic self-descriptions, and the relative numbers of women in each status category can throw light on the question of the position of the wife in a marriage. If wives were dependent on or under the control of living husbands, that could have influenced their decision on whether they should issue a will or not. A woman could have relegated to her husband the task of disposing of the property for the heirs, or could have been forced to do it.⁵

⁵ See Kanter, "Native Female Land", pp. 607-16, and Kanter, "Viudas y vecinos", pp. 28-32, for some implications related to the status of widow for Nahua women.

Of the 30 wills issued by women of the Toluca Valley that have been considered, only in nine cases did the women declare themselves to be married, and that includes a will that one María de Guadalupe ordered on behalf of her nephew.⁶ From these numbers it would seem that only a minority of married women felt the necessity of issuing a will, whether it was because they trusted their husband to arrange everything or because, not expecting death yet, they waited until too late to make one. It can be assumed that the small numbers represent only a minority of married women because in the eighteenth century marriage seems to have been the most common practice for indigenous women. A further indication is the fact that the illegitimacy rate was lower among Indians than among Spaniards or mestizos, as seen in Chapter Three.⁷ In the present corpus too, the infinitesimal number of women who are specifically called *soltera* implies that marriage was virtually universal for healthy women and men. Actually, it might be expected that old women, who were more likely to be widows already, would feel greater pressure to dispose of their property and arrange their burial before dying, while younger women with a living husband might regard this worry as not yet present.

A first look at the number of widows who were testators does not help much in judging whether they were more disposed to issue a will. There are nine cases in which the testator was a widow; in most of these cases the woman declared her status herself, along with her name, while in some cases the information emerges from another part of the document, for instance from the note at the back of the will about the mass that was said. In eleven of the cases remaining, the female testator did not declare her status in the will, but this can often be ascertained through an interpretation of other details in the document. For instance, if a woman had a good number of children, she was likely to have been married, since their existence would imply the type of continuous relationship most often associated with marriage. The situation would be different than in the cases examined in Chapter Three, where women denounced a man for sexual intercourse without marriage. In those instances most of

⁶ AHAM, Box 1757(2), "Testamento – María de Guadalupe", will ordered by María de Guadalupe, 1757.

⁷ See also McCaa, "Marriageways", pp. 23-6, 31-2, on marriage and illegitimacy rate among the Indians.

the women had a child or were pregnant as a result of the relationship, and it was likely that they were going to be single mothers, since in most of the lawsuits the man ended up not marrying them. But if it was possible to have one child in this kind of situation, it was far less probable to have several children; the lesson had been learnt, and women tended not to remain in such a relationship without marriage. Another factor is property; if a woman appears to have had quite a lot of property, the most likely hypothesis is that she had been married and inherited it from her parents, as a contribution to the marriage, or in some cases as a consequence of the death of her husband.

Some of the cases for which nothing is said about women's status can be considered in the light of these assumptions. For instance, there were three women of the same family who lived in San Mateo Aticpac; the first one, Elena de la Cruz, issued her will in 1711, the other two, María Hernández and María Josefa, in 1737 (see Appendix).⁸ In not one of the three cases did they say a word about living or deceased husbands; however, from the property they bequeathed and in Elena de la Cruz's case also from the number of children she had, it can be assumed that the testaments were made by widows. Moreover, in María Josefa's case we can affirm that she had been married and was a widow at the time of issuing her will because her husband's will was found; his name was Adrián Josef and he had died in 1733 (see Appendix).⁹ The fact that this omission of the husband occurs with women of the same family may say something in terms of women's position and attitude in that particular family. In the same district there was another woman, María Ana de Morales, who issued her will in 1707 without mentioning her status.¹⁰ As in the previous instances, she seems to have been quite well off because of the property she had. Also her type of Spanish name gives some hint of high status; moreover, she passed her last name on to her two daughters as well, which was uncommon, as will become more apparent below. At the back of her will, where an account of the mass is given, it emerges that she was a widow, giving us confidence that in other cases in which no specific declaration about widowhood is

⁸ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737; "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

⁹ AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de Adrián Josef", 1733.

¹⁰ AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707.

made, we can, with the support of evidence about property, children, or name, deduce with reasonable certainty that the women were widows. Of the eleven cases, at least eight can be interpreted in this way, so that the larger number of widows who issued a will compared to married women becomes significant, seventeen to nine, or double in practice.

At any given time, of course, the number of married women must have been considerably larger than the number of widows, which makes the preponderance of widows and the reluctance of married women to make wills all the more striking. Yet it is not the absolute number in the two categories who were alive at any given time that is crucial, but the number who died, and normally a larger proportion of the older group would die in a given year. In the absence of mortality data specifying the status of the decedents, we cannot be quite sure whether married women were really less prone to issue wills at death, as it seems, or whether the two groups of widows and married women are represented in about the same proportion as their relative mortality rates.

An interesting thing here is that generally women did not seem to bother about declaring their status, and this is even more evident in documents from other times and places, as in the group of testaments from Culhuacan around 1580, where most of the women did not mention whether they were married, widows or spinsters.¹¹ The same pattern appears to be common with men, as will be shown below. As a consequence, many testaments lack examples of the indigenous terminology that was used to define one's status, but fortunately there are many exceptions as well, so that a study on terminology can be carried out. A first interesting case is the testament of María Micaela, who declares herself unmarried, using the Nahuatl term *ichpocatl*.¹² It is the only example in the corpus of documents, and from the property she bequeaths and the autonomous and independent decisions she makes, it can be assumed that she is not a

¹¹ Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, Documents 33, 37, 38, 43.

¹² AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of María Micaela, 1762. The word is a variant of the more common *ichpochtli*, maiden, unmarried young woman, which as we will see meant daughter when in the possessive. Molina's dictionary gives other terms for an unmarried woman, meaning one who lives in an unchanged state or one who does not have a spouse. It is possible, though not demonstrable, that *ichpocatl* in the present sense developed as a translation of the Spanish *soltera*, 'spinster'.

young girl. Her use of the indigenous term to define herself leads us to the following step in the analysis, that is, the terminology used to distinguish between a widow and a woman who was presently married. Whenever a woman declared that she was married, she did it not by some term designating a married woman or a married person, but by indicating her husband's name preceded by the Nahuatl word *-namic*, which had long been the general term in Nahuatl for spouse, with no gender connotation.¹³ A single document of 1696 calls a woman *namique*, a married person, without giving the name of the husband, but it was not a self-reference by a testator.¹⁴

Normally the husband is mentioned immediately after the woman's name and place of residence, as a way of helping to give her identity: "ca nehual noṭoca ana ma[ri]a notlaxilacalpa s. Luis nonamictzi ytoca fran[cis]co mateo / I named Ana María, whose *tlaxilacalli* is San Luis, and my spouse is named Francisco Mateo".¹⁵ In very rare cases the mention was left until later, as with Antonia María, who referred to her spouse only at the end of the will and in relation to caring for her children.¹⁶ The curious thing here is that just above she had declared that her brother was to look after them, and this contradiction may be a hint of some trouble between the couple. If there

¹³ In this chapter several Nahuatl terms for relationships are cited with a hyphen preceding because they virtually never appear in the absolute form, but are always contingent, in grammatical terms always in the possessive. There should be a form *namictli*, 'spouse', with an absolutive ending, but it is never seen in documents and hardly even in dictionaries. The word occurs as *nonamic*, 'my spouse', *inamic*, 'his or her spouse', etc. In the eighteenth-century Toluca documents the meaning is essentially 'my or her husband', as will become clearer. The word *cihuatl* means woman and occurs frequently with the absolutive in that meaning, but when it means wife it is *nocihuauh*, 'my wife', *icihuauh*, 'his wife', etc., so that the word *cihuatl* in the meaning 'wife' will be given here preceded by a hyphen to indicate the possessive prefix that would always be present. The simple possessed form of the word is *-cihuauh*, but in the documents the most common form is the one with the reverential *-tzin*, *-cihuahuatzin*, so that is the one that will be used in the main text. *-Namic* too can be in the reverential, *-namictzin*, but not with such overwhelming frequency, so simple *-namic* is retained in the text. There is no direct evidence on why the term used for a husband should often be without the reverential while the term used for a wife bears it in the vast majority of cases; the only explanation that comes to mind is the special courtesy shown to females in many cultures.

¹⁴ AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696; *namique*, meaning a married person of either gender, at least originally, consists of *namic-*, 'spouse', plus the *-e* possessor ending, 'one who possesses something', and means 'one who has a spouse'; if a woman is called by this term, the *namic*-actually refers to the man she is married to. The present case is unusual in that an absolute term for married person, here applied to a married woman, is used instead of just naming her spouse, the only known instance of such usage in the corpus examined here. As an absolute term, *namique* was not contingent and could not be possessed, therefore it is cited here without the hyphen preceding *-namic* and *-cihuahuatzin*. The same is true of *icnocihuatl*, an older term for widow that will be mentioned just below, and the borrowed Spanish terms *viuda* and *viudo*, 'widow' and 'widower'.

¹⁵ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ana María", 1716.

¹⁶ AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753.

were in fact problems with her husband, it would have been understandable for Antonia María to mention him just before ending the will, as a sort of afterthought.

Not only living male spouses were called *-namic*; in some cases in which a widow included the name of her deceased husband in the will, she referred to him as *-namic* as well, so that this seems to be the standard term used to define a husband under any circumstances. As for the status of widow itself, the common word that is found in the wills is the Spanish *viuda*, while no Nahuatl term appears. Actually there was a Nahuatl word with the same meaning, *icnocihuatl*, probably a preconquest term; it has been found in earlier colonial wills such as the Testaments of Culhuacan in which, on the contrary, no use is made of the Spanish *viuda*.¹⁷ Moreover, in the early Cuernavaca tribute lists there was a common term, *in oquichmic*, meaning a woman whose husband has died.¹⁸ However, there is no trace of either term in the documents of Toluca in the eighteenth century. This seems to suggest a change of practice during the colonial period, in tune with the fact that Stage 3 Nahuatl adopted many words coming from Spanish that were of a more intimate and basic nature than before. The usage could also be a regional variation, to be confirmed through studies on other areas in central Mexico during the same period. Finally, an interesting case is the one of Lucía María, who declared nothing about her marital status, but only that she was an old woman, *lamantzín* (standard *ilamatzin*) in Nahuatl.¹⁹

The conclusions reached so far on the basis of women's wills may be usefully compared to some details from men's wills. In about half of the 38 cases considered, the testator declared himself to be married (twenty), while in two more cases he did not declare it, but the fact was otherwise reported. In only four cases was the man declared to be a widower, and this may be related to the lower life expectancy for men. In the other half of the cases, the man did not say anything about his status, but we can

¹⁷ Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, Documents 4 and 25. In other cases, as in Documents 17, 39, and 67, *-namic catca* is found, with the meaning of one's late or former husband, literally 'one who was one's husband'.

¹⁸ S. L. Cline, *The Book of Tributes. Early Sixteenth-Century Nahuatl Censuses from Morelos*. UCLA Latin American Center Nahuatl Studies Series 4 (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1993), p. 112 and many others.

¹⁹ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Lucía María, 1728.

draw some conclusions from other details. First, in all cases but one the men in question had a family, all of them at least two children and in some cases as many as six. Since the number of children constitutes a strong clue for the existence of a relationship, we can assume that almost all of them had been married, or had had a stable relationship. The exception is Josef Matías; he does not mention any children, so we can speculate that he was widower with no children, or an unmarried man.²⁰ A wife not being mentioned can often be explained by the simple fact that she was dead; however, it can also be said that often the man did not need to mention his wife if he left her nothing, especially if the children were already grown up and she was not needed for custodial care. The interpretation remains open, but there is less doubt here that those men who mentioned children but no wife had or had had a spouse than with women who mentioned children and no husband. The evidence establishes an important difference then, showing how it was normal for men to issue a will while their wives were still alive, whereas it was only a minority practice among women. We must also consider that due to the difference in ages, it was likely that husbands would die before their wives.

In the cases of the widowers, only twice did the testator define himself by the Spanish term *viudo*; in the other cases he mentioned his dead wife, saying that she was *difunta*, 'deceased' in Spanish, or that she had been his wife, *nocihuahuatzin catca* in Nahuatl.²¹ It is not entirely clear whether *viudo* was a less common term than *viuda*, or the different use of the two words is simply the result that more wives survived husbands than vice versa.

It is very interesting to observe the way in which men stated that they were married, for both genders used the same mechanism. As with the women, men usually declared their wives' names after theirs as a form of completing their identity. A significant difference appears, however, in the fact that the Nahuatl term widely used was not the genderless and possibly postconquest word *-namic*, but *-cihuahuatzin* (the reverential of *-cihuauh*), which had a strong gender connotation, since it basically meant 'woman'

²⁰ AGNCi 664, exp. 3, Testament of Josef Matías, 1759.

²¹ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1715, and AGNT 2547, exp. 2, Testament of Bartolomé Elías, 1746.

and indeed in a possessive form was the normal term for wife in the preconquest period and even the early postconquest period. In fact, *-cihuauh* is the predominant term in the Book of Tributes, written in the time around 1535-1545 and retaining Stage 1 usage.²² During Stage 2 *-namic* was mainly used for both genders, as in the Testaments of Culhuacan, where no *-cihuauh* is recorded.²³ In contrast, in the Toluca corpus the general term *-namic* has been found in reference to a woman in only two cases, the wills of don Diego Lorenzo and Lucas Damián, one referring to a distinguished woman (a *doña*), while the other came from a wealthy family, as indicated by the property bequeathed.²⁴ In two other cases the man used the half-Spanish expression *casado ica* ('married to', literally 'married with', based on the Spanish *casado con*), showing strong Spanish influence and abandoning any categorisation of the wife.²⁵ This expression was not used with women, since no parallel examples of *casada ica* have been found.

If we compare the pattern of terminology with the Testaments of Culhuacan from Stage 2, we realise that a change has occurred, since in that corpus, as in others of the time, the term *-namic* was used for both genders equally, and *-cihuahuatzin* is not seen. It appears that by the eighteenth century, at least in the Toluca region, the Nahuas were moving towards a way of indicating gender within the couple, as allowed by the Spanish language, and apparently influenced by Spanish custom. In almost all the wills here examined *-namic* refers to a male and *-cihuahuatzin* to a female. This change is totally consistent with the emergence of Stage 3 in Nahuatl, in which Spanish words and concepts penetrate more deeply into the indigenous language due to more contact between the populations and the existence of more bilingual Nahuas. In a core area like the Valley of Mexico, this process started around 1650, in a

²² Cline, *Book of Tributes*, *passim*.

²³ Lockhart in *The Nahuas*, pp. 80-8, examines the question of the history of the term *-namic*; although *-namic* has many characteristics of a preconquest term, evidence for its preconquest use remains inconclusive. In Stage 1 other terms were used except for allusions to specifically Christian marriage. In Stage 2 it became overwhelmingly predominant in reference to both genders.

²⁴ AHAM, Box 1718, "Testamento de don Diego Lorenzo", 1719; AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696. Lucas Damián's will is the same one where the absolute word *namique* I explained above has been found; it is relevant to note that of the three exceptions relative to the root *-namic*- in the corpus examined here, two appear in the same document.

²⁵ AHAM, Box 1731, "Testamento de Luis Francisco", 1731; Box 1733, "Testamento de Adrián Josef", 1733.

provincial area like Toluca plausibly a bit later. Something of the timing of the evolution is visible through the will of Felipe Bartolomé of 1662, in which the testator called his wife *-namic* three times, showing that the term was still being used to refer to both genders. However, he also used the term *-cihuahuatzin* once, which shows that the new usage was developing during the decades before 1700.²⁶

Female Kinship Terminology Beyond Marriage

The preceding section has examined the words used in the Toluca Valley in the early eighteenth century to describe women in relation to marriage. Now let us look at the terms used in this time and place to describe females in their other roles, as daughters, nieces, sisters, cousins, in-laws, and also as mothers, aunts, grandmothers, that is, in all the kin relationships that the society saw fit to name. Again females will be placed in the context of the usage of the whole society; female kin terminology will be discussed in a broader framework including the terminology used for males as well. Thus on the one hand any differences between the genders will emerge, and on the other hand overall commonalities and trends can be seen. As before, the ultimate purposes are to try to bring out the implications that the status terminology used may have had for the position of females in the household and the society, and to see to what extent and in what ways its usage in eighteenth-century Toluca had evolved since earlier times.

In the discussion of terminology for women in relation to marriage, all the categories and words used, both in the older system and the one current in the time of direct interest here, have close parallels in various European languages and are immediately apparent to us. The broader system of terminology is much more opaque from the point of view of the European tradition, not perhaps so much in the form found in eighteenth-century records, but in the preconquest form which largely persisted unchanged until around the middle of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, most information on preconquest terminology comes from postconquest sources, so that a

²⁶ AHAM, Box 1739-40, "Testamento de Felipe Bartolomé", 1662.

study of the terms used can hardly be carried out through texts of the period. A certain amount of direct information about the situation in Stage 1 is contained in the early Cuernavaca-region census records (in Cline, *Book of Tributes*), but it lacks the depth and completeness of what we know from the far larger corpus written in Stage 2.²⁷ Taking then Stage 2 as a point of reference for comparison, it is worth sketching the main elements of the system out of which eighteenth-century Toluca usage evolved.²⁸

In the traditional Nahuatl framework, the words for relatives of preceding generations were closely parallel in meaning and domain to those in European languages, differing only in their contingent quality, in that they were virtually always possessed by the word for the person from whom the relationship was reckoned: *-nan[tzin]* 'one's mother', *-ta[tzin]* 'one's father', *-ahui[tzin]* 'one's aunt', *-ila[tzin]* 'one's uncle', *-ci[tzin]* 'one's grandmother', *-col[tzin]* 'one's grandfather'.²⁹ All of these terms were just like those in European languages in that they show the gender of the person talked about and not that of the person who is the point of reference for the relationship.

A large difference comes in the terms for relatives younger than the point of reference. A ruling principle of Nahuatl kinship terminology in its traditional form was that the gender of younger relatives was not specified; instead the terms used specified the gender of the point of reference. This meant that the terms for kin of the same generation were split into categories very different from those with which we are familiar. There was no word for sister in general, or for brother. Rather, Nahuatl had words for one's older sister, one's older brother, and one's younger sibling of either gender (moreover the same words were used for cousins and siblings); what is more, two sets of these terms existed, one for the relationships as reckoned from a female,

²⁷ The working assumption of scholars dealing with these matters, which I too share, is that when kinship terms are found that are markedly different from those in the European system, and fit well into the Nahua system, they are not only characteristic of Stage 2 but of Stage 1 and the preconquest era before it. The method is much like that used by linguistics in reconstructing proto-languages, and is strengthened by the more general perception that virtually no internal cultural change occurred in Stage 1, while in Stage 2 as well most change was at the corporate level and less at the level of the household.

²⁸ For a general discussion of the terminology presented in this introduction, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 72-85; see Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, for illustration.

²⁹ *-Tzin* is the reverential already mentioned, added directly after the noun stem. It has been put in brackets because it may or may not be present. In practice it did not always have a markedly reverential effect but related to the number of syllables in a word, being added to monosyllabic words, as explained later.

and another for them as reckoned from a male. Just for example, the elder sister of a female was *-pi[tzin]*; the elder sister of a male was *-hueltiuh*. The younger sibling of a female, whether that person was female or male, was *-iuc[tzin]*; of a male, *-teiccauh*. Documents of Stage 2 and in particular in the case used here, the Culhuacan Testaments of ca. 1580, still maintain this system in its purity.

The older Nahuatl system was not, however, without some inconsistencies. On the basis of what was just said, we would expect two words for child, one for the child of a female, one for the child of a male, with no distinction of gender in the case of the child. To a large extent our expectations are met. Child of a female was *-coneuh*, child of a male *-pil[tzin]*. Indeed, these terms are found in texts of Stage 2 used for offspring of any age. A complication was that *-piltzin* had become much more common than *-coneuh*, being used by women as well in many cases. Even this early, however, a strong tendency can be observed (and perhaps it existed in preconquest times as well) to make gender distinctions with those offspring who, despite the fact that they are younger than the point of reference, are grown up, that is, beyond puberty. In apparently most cases, if the Culhuacan testaments are a good indication, the Nahuas used the terms *-ichpoch*, one's grown-up daughter (using a word which in the absolutive means 'maiden, young unmarried woman') and *-telpoch*, one's grown-up son (using a word meaning in the absolutive 'youth, young unmarried man'). The terms were the same whether reckoned from a female or from a male. The word *-piltzin* for child regardless of gender was sometimes used for grown-up offspring, especially when speaking of more than one, but it was used above all for prepubescent children, for whom gender distinctions in the primary term itself are almost not seen. In the rare cases where it became important to specify gender, a second word, *cihuatl*, 'a female', or *oquichtli*, 'a male', was added.

Following the general trend in the terminology for younger relatives, the words for nieces and nephews showed the gender of the reference point but not of the referent: *-pillo* was either the niece or the nephew of a woman, *-mach* the niece or nephew of a man. With grandchildren the word *-ixhuiuh*, 'one's grandchild', covered both genders

and both pre- and postpubescent descendants; it did not vary with the gender of the person from whom the relationship was reckoned.

The situation with in-laws was as follows. Mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law were much as we know them in European languages, given the usual contingency. It is likely that there was once no gender distinction with children-in-law, but by postconquest times the general word for one's child-in-law, *-mon*, was used only for males, and in the case of females the word was modified by *cihuatl*, 'female,' giving *-cihuamon*, 'one's daughter-in-law'. As with blood relatives, the terminology for in-laws of the same generation differed greatly from the European. The terms did not divide according to age relative to that of the point of reference as with siblings but referred to a same-generation relative whether younger or older. A female's sister-in-law was *-huezhui*; a male's brother-in-law was *-tex*; and an in-law of the same generation and opposite gender was *-huepol*, that is, a female's brother-in-law or a male's sister-in-law. Against this background, let us turn to an examination of the system found in the documents of eighteenth-century Toluca (for a summary see Figures 7, 8, and 9; terminology in Figure 7 has been reproduced only from the woman's point of reference due to the fact that in Stage 3 female and male kinship terms were very similar, as discussed below).

Older Relatives

The words for older relatives in the direct line underwent no obvious change in the Valley of Toluca during the period examined here (Stage 3), in either conceptual organisation, gender differentiation, or the words themselves. The words for mother and father, *-nan* and *-ta*, are always in the reverential as *-nantzin* and *-tatzin*, which in itself is not socially significant, for Nahuatl tried to avoid monosyllabic terms and normally added the reverential *-tzin* to almost any kinship word of a single syllable. However, one often sees in addition the element *-tlaço-*, meaning 'precious', a significant fact in that this special sign of respect is almost entirely lacking in words for spouses and children. We grasp the sense of deference even more if we consider

Figure 7: Female kinship terminology - Toluca Valley, 1700 - 67 (Stage 3)

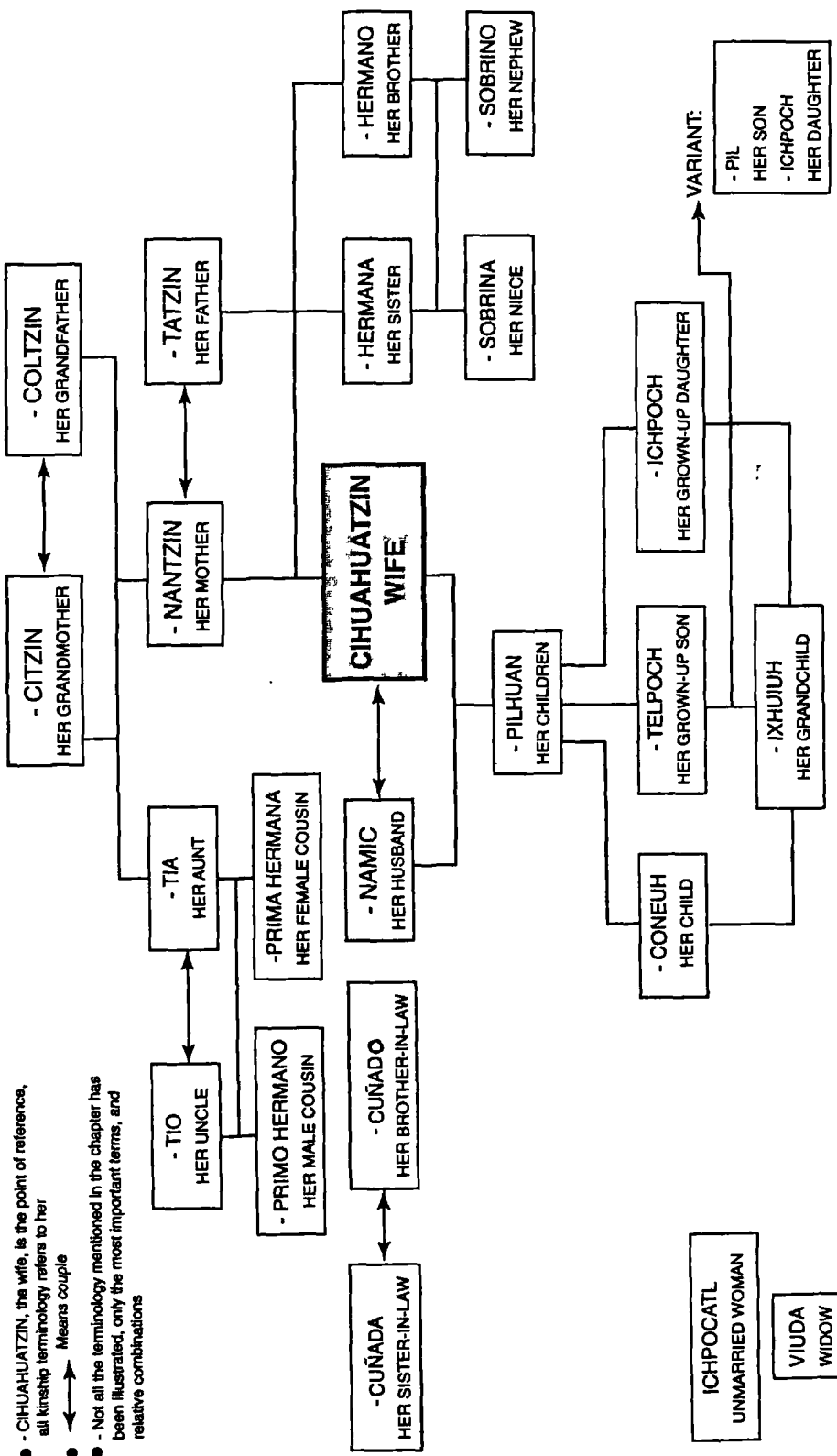


Figure 8: Female kinship terminology - Sixteenth century (Stage 2)

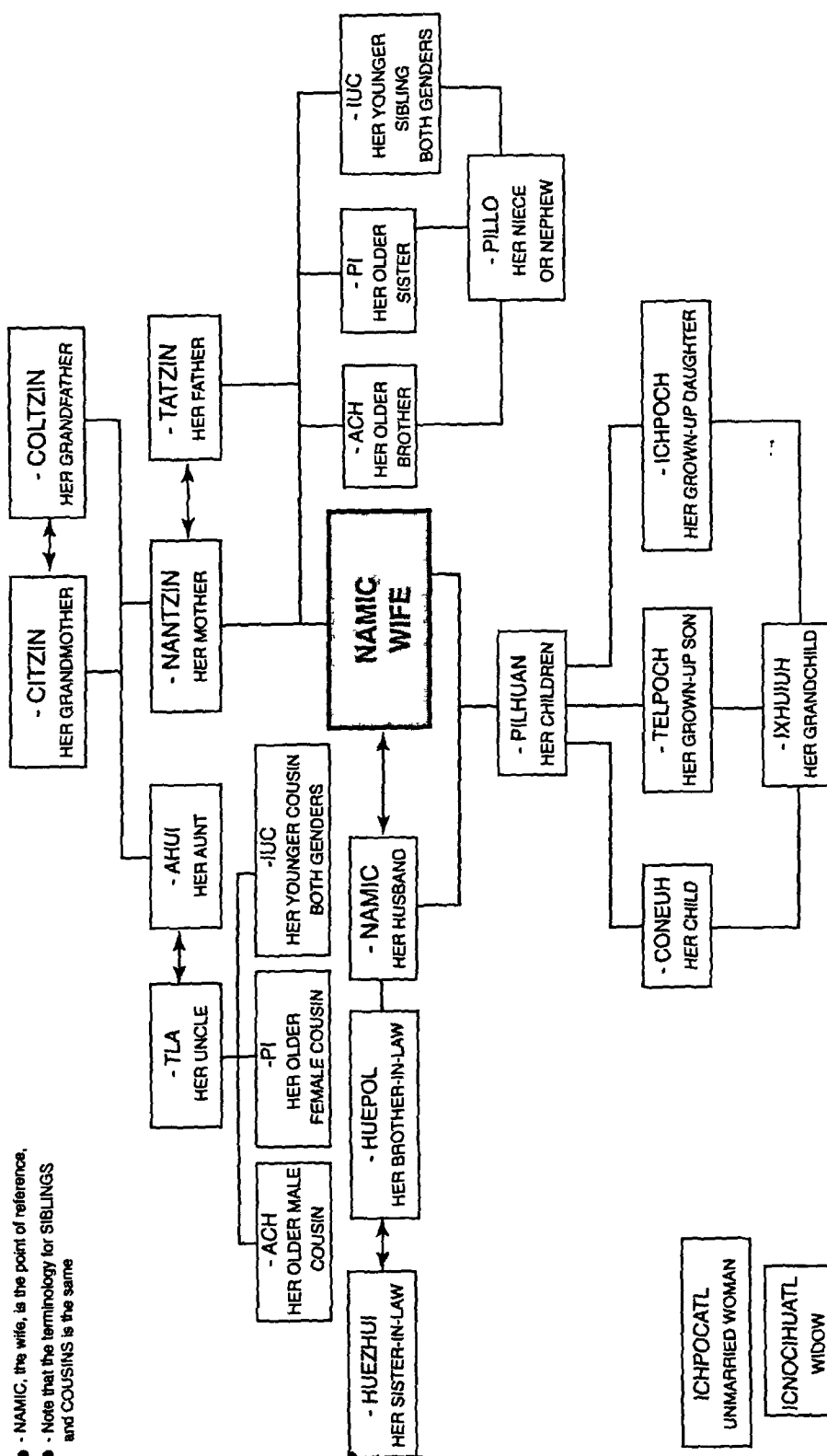
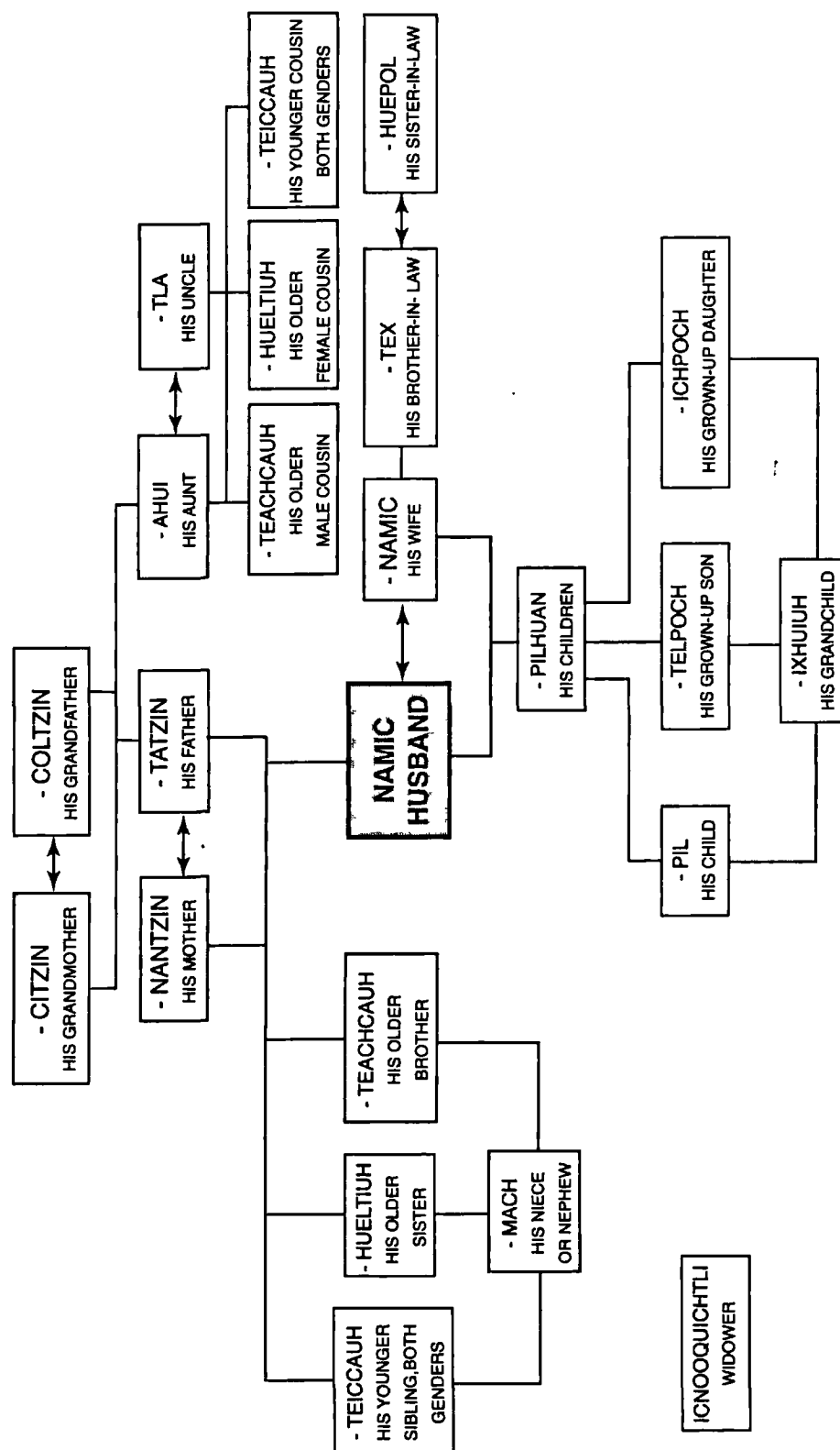


Figure 9: Male kinship terminology - Sixteenth century (Stage 2)



that *-tlaço-* was used above all to express religious devotion and reverence in referring to God, the Virgin, the saints, the blood of Christ, etc. The construction was used for both genders and for living or dead parents, with a slight predominance of those cases in which they had already died. This usage apparently expressed a respect for the whole class of parents rather than a particular affection for a certain individual. A María Hernández, of whom we will hear more, referred to the mother of one of her heirs as *ylasonantzín* (standard *itlaçonantzín*), 'his precious mother', even though we know from litigation records that the two were on bad terms (see Appendix).³⁰ An example which links the terms for parents even more to religious respect is the use by the former governor of Tepemaxalco, don Juan de la Cruz, of the form *-tlaçomahuiztatzín*, 'precious revered father', for his own deceased father, for if *-tlaço-* itself was associated with religious reverence, *-tlaçomahuiz-* was even more specific and prevalent. It is perhaps significant that the word was used in the context of a rich and locally powerful family.³¹

In general, mothers and fathers are spoken of in much the same fashion. However, it is of interest to search for any subtle distinctions. For example, it would be worthwhile to know whether there was any tendency for a female testator to mention her mother and a male his father. The pattern is not clear, however, for in women's wills the father is mentioned in two cases and the mother in three. Male testators referred to their father in eight wills and to their mother in six, in two cases coupled with the father. One of these two cases is that of don Juan de la Cruz just mentioned who, while referring to both his parents, put far more emphasis on his father, calling him first *-tatzín*, then *-tlaçotatzín*, then *-tlaçomahuiztatzín*, all in the same will. Taking into consideration that the corpus of men's wills is larger, still it seems slightly more common for a male testator to mention his father than for a female to mention her mother. A clearer distinction can be made as to the reasons why testators of the two genders referred to their parents. Women usually mentioned their parents only when attempting to affirm their rights to some property they had inherited, especially land, while men brought up their names in the context of desiring to be buried in the same place, to have them take

³⁰ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737.

³¹ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

care of their children, or even simply to mention who they were, as important to their own identities. It would seem that defending property from the claims of others was more pressing for women, probably because their rights were more often questioned.³²

As for grandparents, the cases in which they are mentioned are almost all in men's wills; perhaps this strengthens the notion that men gave more attention to lineage across generations, as just suggested.³³ A grandmother, *-citzin*, is mentioned in only two cases, a grandfather in four, two of them as *-tlaçocoltzin* and two as simple *-coltzin*, so it seems that both expressions were commonly employed. The use of 'precious' has the same flavour of deference towards elders as with parents, so it does not appear that reverence was any different between parents and grandparents. The context in which the terms were used may be revealing. Mateo Juan mentioned his grandmother, Juana María, to support his position as heir to a house as opposed to his sister, while Josef Matías referred to his female ancestor to justify bequeathing some land that she had left him. As for grandfathers, three of them were mentioned for much the same reason, to validate the transmission of land to the testator's children. Thus it seems that grandparents were referred to essentially to support one's property rights, especially when they were contested by other family members.³⁴ Finally, there is no mention of grandparents in terms of the testator wishing to be buried in the same place where they lay, as happened with parents.

By the early eighteenth century the traditional terms *-ahui*, 'aunt', and *-tla*, 'uncle', had given way entirely to the Spanish-derived *-tia* and *-tio*. Aside from the external form of the words and the implication of the influence of Spanish discourse, no distinctions of any kind are lost and gained. In the present corpus the terms are not

³² Indeed, an article by Deborah Kanter shows how, by the second half of the eighteenth century, native female land ownership had declined significantly due to the increase in population and consequently in competition for land. Compared to native men, women and especially widows were an easier target for dispossession, since they were less involved in village politics and had fewer connections. Kanter, "Native Female Land", pp. 607-16.

³³ The only exception is Pascuala María [AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala María, 1762], who mentions her grandfather in connection with an image.

³⁴ The cases involved are AGNT 2616, exp. 7, Testament of don Pascual Domingo, 1724; AGNT 2541, exp. 9, Testament of Francisco Martín, 1735; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753; AGNT 2301, exp. 9, Testament of Guillermo Martín, 1737; AGNCi 664, exp. 3, Testament of Josef Matías, 1759.

very frequent; particularly, the term *-tia* has been found just once, while *-tio* only appeared in two documents. Being entirely parallel, the two terms do not show any differential treatment of the genders.³⁵

Same-Generation Blood Relatives

In this domain, a revolution had taken place since the time of the Culhuacan Testaments. The traditional terminology, ignoring the distinctions between siblings and cousins, dividing one's own generation sharply into those older and those younger, and with those younger showing only the gender of the reference point, not the gender of the person spoken of, had disappeared almost entirely. Instead, Spanish loanwords had been adopted making no age distinctions, showing the gender of the referent and not the point of reference, and distinguishing between siblings and cousins. Only the traditional Nahuatl contingency remained, in that the terms were virtually always possessed: *-hermana*, 'sister'; *-hermano*, 'brother'; *-prima hermana*, 'female first cousin'; *-primo hermano*, 'male first cousin'.³⁶

The words for siblings are common in the documents, quite often with the reverential *-tzin* at the end. It seems that testators of both genders refer to brothers and sisters equally, but it is of interest to consider the possibility of different reasons motivating them. In women's wills one or more brothers are sometimes mentioned in relation to inheritance, when the testator either leaves something to them or refers to a bequest that she had received from them. In one case a brother is mentioned as owing money to the woman testator. Women's sisters often come into play because of issues more related to the cult of the saints. Male testators demonstrate a wider variety of reasons for bringing up their brothers' names. One brother is asked to take care of the testator's widow, while receiving some property; another is asked to be executor, another again to take care of the testator's small children. Sometimes male testators

³⁵ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala María, 1762, for the term *-tia*; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693, and AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Miguel Lucas, 1733, for *-tio*.

³⁶ An example of *prima hermana* is in AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala María, 1762; and examples of *primo hermano* in AHAM, Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733, and AHAM, Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757.

warn sisters not to interfere with their dispositions about inheritance, while in other cases they are referred to as heirs of small parcels of land.³⁷ Finally, in one case Pedro Pablo entrusts to his sister Ursula María the care of his small children, together with the worship of the saints that are inside his house.³⁸

One of the main remnants of the traditional Nahuatl system with same-generation blood kin are the terms for the eldest, *yacapanli*, and youngest, *xocoyotl*. Indeed, from bare hints which cannot be fully developed at present, it appears that wills often, perhaps even normally, mention siblings in order of birth, and that the eldest and youngest may have some special position. But if so, the terms are not gender-specific. One of the most prominent mentions of an eldest child refers to a woman.³⁹ Both genders appear as *xocoyotl*. At times, however, the Spanish loanwords for siblings are modified by diminutives to indicate if not exactly relative age then at least that a sibling is small, as in *-hermanillo* or *-hermanito*.⁴⁰

If Spanish-derived terms had taken over same-generation kinship almost completely, we still see some slight evidence that the older system was not utterly forgotten. In a document of 1701 a man calls his older sister *-hueltiuh*, the traditional term, indicating not only the sister's seniority but the man's gender. In the traditional system it was often a term of considerable respect, but in this case the testator has only bad things to say about the woman. Again, in a document of 1737 Guillermo Martín refers to his younger brother as *-tecca* (standard form *-teiccauh*); the term does not specify the gender of the sibling even if through the name we know that it was a male.⁴¹

³⁷ AGNT 2616, exp. 7, Testament of Mateo Juan, 1701, and AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723.

³⁸ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737.

³⁹ AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696. His daughter Francisca Cristina is referred to as the testator's eldest, *-yacapanzin*.

⁴⁰ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693; AGNCi 664, exp. 3, Testament of Josef Matías, 1759.

⁴¹ AGNT 2616, exp. 7, Testament of Mateo Juan, 1701; AGNT 2301, exp. 9, Testament of Guillermo Martín, 1737.

Children and Grandchildren

Let us first look at aspects which show a strong continuity from Stage 2, the time of the Culhuacan Testaments, and indeed there are a number of such continuities, as well as some notable changes. In eighteenth-century Toluca the normal way to refer to one's children as a group, whether of mixed gender or not, was still the traditional *-pilhuan* (the possessed plural form of *-pil*), not of course indicating gender. Even at the individual level one can find some examples of a child being called *-piltzin* regardless of age or gender, even a grown-up female child.⁴² In one case the ungendered terminology is made unambiguous in the traditional way by adding 'female' and 'male'.⁴³ Normally a testator would refer to a child or children as hers/his, with the first person singular possessive prefix *no-*. Testators of both genders did this equally; apparently it has to do primarily with the fact that one particular parent is leaving something to particular children, and does not imply any disregard for the parent of the other gender. Whatever the reason, the practice is in line with the pervasive tendency to speak in terms of individual relationships from the point of view of a particular person, never mentioning any such entity as a 'family' or 'lineage'. Only once in the corpus do we see *topilhuan*, 'our children', as if the testator, a woman, wanted to stress the importance of the link with her husband and the existence of a larger unit including the children and both parents.⁴⁴

Above we saw that as early as the time of the Culhuacan testaments, if not earlier, parents were mainly referring to grown-up children by terms that violated the principle of not showing the gender of offspring, calling a female specifically 'one's (grown-up) daughter', *-ichpoch*, and a male 'one's (grown-up) son', *-telpoch*. Parents of both genders used the terms. In a sense, little had changed in this respect in the Toluca Valley during the period studied here. Looking first at the occurrences of the word *-ichpoch*, 'one's daughter' (leaving out of consideration for the moment its use in the

⁴² AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Lucía María, 1728 and AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766.

⁴³ After mentioning her children as a group, Elena de la Cruz [AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711] specifies their gender by putting *çihuatzitzinti* after *-pilhuan* to indicate the daughters and *oquichtin* to indicate the sons, both in their absolute forms as was the convention.

⁴⁴ AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766.

diminutive), the term is normally used to refer to a grown-up daughter. That is true in almost all occurrences in women's wills, and men used the word *-ichpoch* in the same way; in twelve cases in which it was found, eleven refer to a grown-up daughter. The fact that the daughter is grown up is not always clearly stated, but it can be deduced from other details, such as her being married or being entrusted with certain tasks. If she was to take care of the family house and the land going with it, or of a small child, we are left in no doubt. One tends to make the same deduction from the fact of a child being entrusted with the parent's burial and funeral, but it may be that such language was sometimes used merely to mean that the expenses were to be paid from the child's inheritance. Even so, it is clear that most of those assigned such tasks were adults.

The corresponding term for one's son, *-telpoch*, appeared especially in men's wills, while only two mentions have been found in women's wills.⁴⁵ The difference seems of great potential significance, but is hard to interpret with the present materials. In principle, at least, the two terms went parallel, distinguishing the two genders, putting them on an equal basis (both words are based on the same root), and used by parents of both genders. Thus they corresponded to Spanish patterns but cannot be attributed to Spanish influence because of their early date. Another pattern in referring to grown-up children, not as well developed but nevertheless clearly observable, was to call females *-ichpoch* while retaining the in principle genderless *-pil* for males. In several documents male children, including those who are grown up, are called *-pil*, while grown-up female children are called *-ichpoch*.⁴⁶ In this usage, as with the words for spouses that we saw earlier, *-namic* and *-cihuahuatzin*, the primary, nongendered term is appropriated for the male only, and a gendered term is used for the female. Since gender distinction between grown-up children goes far back in time and Spanish uses the feminine and masculine of the same word for this purpose, it is hard to show any specific Spanish influence on the development.

⁴⁵ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711 and AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Testament of Nicolasa Albarrán, 1737.

⁴⁶ Some examples can be found in: AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692; AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1715.

It is with small children, children before puberty, that some strong changes are evident since Stage 2, and even they are not across the board, for many hints of older usage remain. The traditional terms *-piltzin*, 'child of a man' (with many exceptions) and *-coneuh*, 'child of a woman', continued to be used to indicate small children. *-Piltzin* referred at times to children of both genders, even if in the sample used there was some prevalence of males; *-coneuh* in the sample always refers to males.⁴⁷ *-Coneuh* is generally used to refer to a baby or small child; nevertheless, it is sometimes used for adult children as well, and is the normal term for Jesus as the child of Mary. In the corpus of testaments the term *-coneuh* was employed four times, only by female testators and in three cases indicating small children. One Juana María, however, refers to her child Josef Joaquín as *-coneuh* but at the same time puts him in charge of the household saints and the payment of tribute, so that he must have been grown up. Moreover, Juana María also mentions a grandchild, who was likely Josef Joaquín's child.⁴⁸ The distinction in the use of the two terms can be illustrated through a family cluster from San Miguel Aticpac for which the wills of both wife and husband have been found. Adrián Josef issued his testament in 1733, bequeathing his property to his son Juan Crisóstomo, whom he called his *-piltzin*. His wife María Josefa referred to the same child in 1737 but called him *-coneuh*, at the same time indicating that he was still very young by entrusting him to a tutor (see Appendix).⁴⁹ In cases like this the traditional pattern when speaking of a younger relative, marking gender on the point of reference rather than on the referent, is still followed.

We have seen that in the traditional system, and still in the Toluca corpus, the whole group of children could be called *-pilhuan*; one could also modify the word in order to emphasise their youth and dependence, calling them *-pilhuantoton*, with the diminutive *-ton*, 'one's little children'. And the traditional manner of modification of the genderless terms in case of need with the separate terms 'female' and 'male' is still

⁴⁷ *-Coneuh* in principle could refer to female children as well, according to the Testaments of Culhuacan (Document 6).

⁴⁸ AGNT 2541, exp. 21, Testament of Juana María, 1746.

⁴⁹ AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de Adrián Josef", 1733, and Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

sometimes found in the corpus in reference to small children.⁵⁰ Despite the continued partial adherence to the tradition of genderless reference to small children, a considerable innovation had been made in that to a large extent the genders were now being distinguished for prepubescent children as well as for those who were grown up. The primary way in which this was achieved was to add the diminutive *-ton* to the two gendered terms for grown-up children, giving *-ichpochton*, ‘one’s small daughter or little girl’, and *-telpochton*, ‘one’s small son or little boy’. The two words are quite common in the corpus. It is hard to be sure whether one term or the other was more often used by parents of one gender or the other because men’s wills are more numerous. It is suggestive, however, that no example has been found of *-telpochton*, one’s small son, in women’s wills; instead they used the traditional *-coneuh*, child of a woman.

Some insight into the issue can be obtained through the analysis of a family cluster from San Miguel Chapultepec.⁵¹ Paulina María was married to Marcos de la Cruz; when she issued her testament in 1756 she left her property to a small daughter, her two little sons having died. She referred to the sons with the term *-pilhuantoton*, while the little daughter was *-ichpochton*. Her husband Marcos de la Cruz had died a few years earlier, in 1753; at that time he made no mention of the daughter, but he called the two sons, who were still alive, *-telpochton*. Here we see clearly how men use the term *-telpochton* more frequently. In this example, in the will of Paulina María, we see another development, the tendency to use *-piltzin* for a son and *-ichpochton* for a daughter, as already indicated for grown-up children. The use of the two parallel terms *-ichpoch* and *-telpoch* to distinguish gender among small children was becoming so familiar that it was no longer necessary in all cases to add the *-ton* diminutive. Juan Crisóstomo used *-ichpoch*, unmodified, to refer to his two very young daughters.

⁵⁰ A case in which *-pilhuan* is used and then *oquichtli* is added to distinguish male children is Vicenta Teresa’s will [AHAM, Box 1750, “Testamento de Vicenta Teresa”, 1737]; we know they were small because the husband was put in charge of them.

⁵¹ AGNT 2543, exp. 6, Testament of Paulina María, 1756, and AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753.

Similarly, don Baltasar de los Reyes called his two sons unmodified *-telpoch* and at the same time entrusted the little boys to their mother to be raised.⁵²

As to the area of nieces and nephews, a change had taken place parallel to that with same-generation kin. The old terms marking the gender of the reference point and not that of the referent had disappeared entirely in favour of the Spanish pair *-sobrina*, 'niece,' and *-sobrino*, 'nephew'. In the present corpus, *-sobrino* is very common, while *-sobrina* is used in only two wills, leading one to speculate that nephews were preferred as heirs over nieces. In the domain of grandchildren, no change at all is observed in the usage prevailing at least since Stage 2 and doubtless from preconquest times. The term *-ixhuiuh*, making no distinction either of gender or of age, and used equally by both grandparents, continued in universal use. It is interesting that no attempt at gender differentiation parallel to the Spanish model was made as it was with the generation of one's children. Far less was any Spanish vocabulary introduced, as with *-sobrina/-sobrino* for niece/nephew. It seems that Spanish terminology had more influence on the collateral line than on the direct line.

In-Laws and Ritual Kin

The traditional terms for parents-in-law and children-in-law, which already made the same distinctions as Spanish categories, remained unchanged. A detail that may be worthy of note is that the only two cases in the corpus in which parents-in-law are mentioned are wills of high status men, don Nicolás de Tolentino and don Juan de la Cruz.⁵³ In both cases the parents-in-law were distinguished persons bearing the title of *don* and *doña*, and the testator mentioned the property that they had given him at the time of marriage. Perhaps this further strengthens the hypothesis of men's attention to lineage and identity, in this case their wives' lineage and the relationship between the two kin groups established through marriage. The case of don Juan de la Cruz is especially interesting because the cross-generational connection achieved through his

⁵² AHAM, Box 1700-1, "Testamento de Juan Crisóstomo", 1701; Box 1748-9, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681.

⁵³ AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723; AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

wife gave him access to his deceased father-in-law's position of governor of Tepemaxalco; that means that the post was not available to women, but it was transmitted through their husbands.

The complex set of symmetrical terms for three different classes of siblings-in-law gave way entirely to the Spanish-derived *-cuñada/-cuñado*, generalised sister-in-law and brother-in-law. In the corpus of testaments, not even a hint of the older usage is left, as with same-generation blood relatives. The change does not exactly increase gender distinctions but redefines and simplifies them on the same model as with Spanish sibling terminology.

Besides showing links between blood relatives and in-laws, the testaments reveal how indigenous women and men could be bound through a different kind of relationship essentially based on a sacrament, baptism, so that they can be referred to as ritual kin. The categories are basically Spanish, and their use within indigenous families reveals an adoption of Spanish concepts to a certain extent, together with a sort of naturalisation that emerges in some cases through the adoption of indigenous terms to translate a Spanish notion. However, it cannot be excluded that in precolonial times Nahuatl society had similar links, and even some similar ceremonies, so that such practices may not have been totally unknown to indigenous people. In any case, the basic terms for ritual kinship had been adopted in previous generations.

Following Spanish patterns, a man or a woman who was asked to sponsor a child at her/his baptism became a godparent of the child and a *compadre* (literally 'fellow father') or *comadre* (literally 'fellow mother') of the child's parents.⁵⁴ The godparent took some responsibility for the wellbeing and education of the child and often made her/him some bequest in the testament. Not many cases have been found in the corpus, but at least there is evidence of the penetration of the concept. Very interesting insights into the matter can be obtained through the family cluster from San Miguel

⁵⁴ As among the Spaniards, the terms for godparents of the child (*padrino*, *madrina*) were far less prominent than those indicating the reciprocal ties between the godparents and the biological parents, each calling the other *compadre* and *comadre*. Indeed, *padrino* and *madrina* do not appear in the corpus at all.

Chapultepec that we have already mentioned above. The husband Marcos de la Cruz gave proof of a deep attachment to his *comadre*, probably a Spanish woman in view of her name, *señora* Inés. Moreover, he referred to her with an expression of high deference that we saw above, *-tlaçomahuiz*. At the same time, the wife Paulina María referred to her *compadre* Antonio de la Cruz to assure the fulfilment of her testament. It is curious how in the cluster the husband referred to his *comadre* while the wife brought up her *compadre*, interchanging genders. However, it seems that both the terms were used equally by men and women.⁵⁵

One's godchild, linked to one through baptismal sponsorship, was called *teoyotica -coneuh*, 'one's child through holy things', marking the importance of the sacrament itself.⁵⁶ It is worthy of note that here a Nahuatl term was created to render a Spanish category, possibly because its introduction goes far back to early Stage 2 or even to Stage 1, when Spanish terms were not yet being borrowed. The term was used with referents of both genders, as becomes evident through the testament of Isabel María, who mentions two godchildren, a male and a female, using the same expression.⁵⁷ The Nahuas also had other ways of translating the concept, for a term that is quite unusual in Nahuatl texts has been found as well: *-tlaquatequil*, literally someone who is baptised. Pedro Pablo referred to his two female godchildren in this way, so conceivably the expression was to be used by a man to refer to female godchildren, but since the case is unique in the corpus it cannot be proved.⁵⁸ It is very interesting that despite the fact that 'godchild' was a Spanish category, Spanish terms such as *ahijadolahijada* were hardly used.⁵⁹ In general it can be emphasised that the ritual kinship terms seen in the corpus had already appeared in Stage 2; particularly,

⁵⁵ AGNT 2543, exp. 6, Testament of Paulina María, 1756, and AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753; see also AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737, and Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737.

⁵⁶ In the original form of this term, still predominant in the Culhuacan documents, *teoyotica*, 'through holy things, sacrament, etc.', stood apart from the possessed *-coneuh* or *-piltzin*. In the Toluca corpus there is a strong tendency to incorporate *teoyotica* into the main possessed term, showing perhaps that it had become ever more of a unitary, basic term. *Teoyotica* is even seen shortened in ways that either could be a further step in the same process or could be simple errors by writers who were very prone to leave out syllables.

⁵⁷ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731.

⁵⁸ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737.

⁵⁹ Only one case, *ahijado*, in AGNCi 664, exp. 3, Testament of Josef Matías, 1759, and for a quite late period of time.

teoyotica -coneuh and *teoyotica -piltzin* had become standard by then. However, the same-generation terms, *compadre* and *comadre*, are less common in the Culhuacan Testaments than in the present corpus.⁶⁰

Now that the basic terms expressing family relationships have been analysed, the next section will examine naming patterns as another way through which words used in relation to women can reveal details on their position within the family or household.

Naming Patterns

All the wills of women considered here show that women had both first and second names; this change in the tradition from the ancient custom of single names had already happened in earlier centuries and is merely continued here.⁶¹ First names were much like those used by Spanish women, usually taken from the Christian saints, including some feminised versions of the names of male saints. Name distinctions in terms of status and wealth can be shown by considering the combination of first names with second names and titles, and also their frequent use within the same family group. However, the variations are fewer for women than for men, in the sense that their names are more standardised and tend not to reflect rank and privilege nearly as much; as a consequence, differences in status in the case of women are less visible than for men.

First the Spanish title *doña*, which like its masculine equivalent *don* is a clear mark of high status, was hardly used by the women of the region in the first half of the eighteenth century. This follows the pattern already identified for other regions of central Mexico.⁶² Only three cases have been found of the use of *doña*: *doña Agustina Francisca*, a widow (no mention is made of her husband), and from what she bequeathed we can deduce that she was wealthy; *doña Lorenza de la Cruz*, mentioned

⁶⁰ See some examples in the Testaments of Culhuacan: Documents 48 for *compadre*, and 20, 34, 45 for godchildren.

⁶¹ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 118-21; Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", pp. 107-8.

⁶² Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 125-6; Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", pp. 119-20.

in her husband's will (he was a *don*, don Diego Lorenzo, and the title seems to have adhered to the whole family, since his brother's name was don Francisco Jiménez); doña María Salvadora, again mentioned in the will of her husband, don Nicolás de Tolentino.⁶³ In this case it seems that she already had inherited the title from her family, since her parents are mentioned as *don* and *doña*, and both came from wealthy families; it is probable, in fact, that the *doña* always came from distinction in the woman's lineage. In the case of doña Lorenza de la Cruz, with a second name associated with relatively high rank, that is especially likely. This title was used in a different way by the indigenous groups.⁶⁴ While for Spaniards it was a matter of family and birthright, for the Nahuas it became more a matter of attained position, so it largely depended on appointment to municipal or church office. As a consequence, the female *doña* tended to be much less frequent among indigenous women, since offices were a male prerogative. In fact, the use of *don* is found in five wills of the corpus in which the male testators defined themselves with the title, and the corpus as a whole contains numerous mentions of people with *don* among the witnesses and executors.

There are other cases of wealthy women who did not use the title, for example Isabel María, who owned lands and animals and bequeathed a great deal of property to her daughter Teresa Francisca and other members of the family; yet she did not attain the *doña*. The most striking case is that of Elena de la Cruz (see Appendix).⁶⁵ She was the wealthiest woman among our group, owning houses, lands, magueyes, animals, images and statues of saints and an impressive amount of money that she donated for chapels and church adornments. She also bore a distinguished second name, and as a consequence the *doña* would be expected, but it was not assumed, and the same was true for her children (her husband's name was not given). It is interesting to see that she passed the second name to some of her male children, Gabriel de la Cruz and Santiago de la Cruz, while the others had Spanish second names, such as Ramos, Cabrera and Juárez. The same occurred with one of her daughters, María Hernández,

⁶³ AGNT 2530, exp. 6, Testament of doña Agustina Francisca, 1737; AHAM, Box 1718, "Testamento de don Diego Lorenzo", 1719; AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723.

⁶⁴ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 125-6.

⁶⁵ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711.

while the other one had a more common name for the period, Rosa María. Some of these Spanish second names were very common in indigenous communities and did not mark really high status: Ramos, for example, which derived from Palm Sunday, or Juárez, which was the most Indian of the Spanish surnames, while Cabrera was exceptional. The second name of María Hernández was regarded as being of low status according to Spanish perception, but more impressive than Juárez in the indigenous context. At any rate, the fact that most of Elena de la Cruz's children did not have basic indigenous names could be taken as a sign of some distinction.⁶⁶

The use of second names taken from Spanish surnames as a way of indicating higher status was not very common among the women of the region for this time period.⁶⁷ Apart from Elena de la Cruz's daughter, we have only one case, María Ana de Morales, with a three-part name of Spanish type; the fact that the surname is kept for her two daughters Josefa de Morales and Brígida de Morales follows the Spanish pattern of naming, which was adopted by the wealthiest indigenous people as well.⁶⁸ The Morales name here was kept even for the grandchild, and one of the daughters was said to be married to a man who bore another surname of Spanish type, García. The family must have been distinguished, and marriages were probably arranged within a circle of people of corresponding rank.

Another way of marking distinction was through the use of indigenous dynastic names.⁶⁹ Apart from a few ancient prominent names, generally indigenous names had fallen into disuse by early in the seventeenth century, being replaced by Spanish

⁶⁶ For a general discussion on Spanish names adopted by the Indians, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 123-5. In the Spanish naming system, there was no distinction of rank as to first names, but surnames varied markedly. Certain surnames such as Guzmán were virtually a symbol of nobility; others, such as Maldonado or Salazar, carried a distinct aura of rank. Next in line came surnames which historically were geographical in origin, accompanied by 'de', such as de Segovia or de Avila. At the bottom were the patronymics, such as Pérez from Pedro, or Hernández from Hernando. Such a surname ordinarily indicated plebeian status unless it was accompanied by a surname of one of the other types. This knowledge is well understood by social historians of early Spanish America but has not been systematically treated, though many relevant remarks will be found in such works as James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Social History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994, 2nd ed.), and John E. Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs: Families and Business in Bourbon Mexico City* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983).

⁶⁷ Consonant with Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 123-4, and Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", pp. 117-8.

⁶⁸ AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707.

⁶⁹ Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", pp. 113-4.

names. Whenever they persisted, they marked high rank and were used almost exclusively by males. The wills here examined follow this pattern in the sense that no case was found of indigenous names used by women, and only one case for men. Salvador Francisco de Castro Moctezuma was mentioned in María Josefa's will of 1737 as her brother, but she did not share the last two names despite the fact that the two came from the same family (see Appendix).⁷⁰ It is not surprising that the Castro Moctezuma family was related to the family of Elena de la Cruz, the wealthy woman previously mentioned: an indication of the connections among distinguished indigenous families.

It might be expected that names indicating high status would tend to be passed on to the children to preserve the importance of the family.⁷¹ In fact, among the women's wills here considered, this happened only in the exceptional case of María Ana de Morales, so it does not seem to have been a common practice for the indigenous women of the Valley of Toluca. Also in terms of more usual names, with no rank implication, there were not many cases of mothers passing their name down to female children. Mauricia Josefa left her property to her daughter Micaela Josefa, and Lucía María had a daughter called Pascuala Lucía (inversion of first and second name), although, perhaps having nothing, she left nothing to her, only asking her to pay for her funeral.⁷² Similar cases suggest that maybe names were passed on for devotional reasons or to maintain a family tradition, independently of property and status. Of course in some cases the name María as first or second name is repeated between mother and daughters, but due to the fact that it appears to have been the most popular name among indigenous women in the colonial period, the repetition of María is not a strong proof of name transmission. An exception can be made for some particularly compelling cases, such as that of María de la Cruz, who left everything to two daughters, Verónica María and Lucía María, including some land that María Pascuala, her mother, had left her previously.⁷³ In this case, the name María as first or second

⁷⁰ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

⁷¹ Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", pp. 110-1.

⁷² AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Mauricia Josefa", 1732; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Lucía María, 1728.

⁷³ AGNCi 997, exp. 2, Testament of María de la Cruz, 1736.

name was transmitted over three female generations, and seems to be very strong within the family. No mention is made of male members, apart from a grandchild who inherited an image of saint, and for whatever reason, in this instance women seem to have had control over some lands that were passed only through the female line. This is a valuable insight on the strong position that these women had in their family. Another similar case can be found in Bernardino de Santiago's will, where his four daughters Tomasa, Melchora, Ursula, and Pascuala all bore the second name Francisca; unfortunately, nothing is said of the mother, but it might be assumed that there was some connection with her.⁷⁴ Notice that the unifying Francisca was not the second name of the father, though Santiago was a relatively distinguished name often carried from one generation to the other, as will be explained shortly.

The practice of passing on a parent's name to the child of the same gender was much more common between father and male child. Women's wills provide some examples, such as Melchora María's husband, Juan Valeriano, who gave the same name to their male child, or Vicenta Teresa's husband, Juan Miguel, whose son was Juan Diego (even if the name Juan tended to occupy the same position as María for women, so it is not a very strong case).⁷⁵ However, men's wills are even richer in this kind of pattern. Gaspar Melchor had two children, Miguel Gaspar and María Melchora, while his father's name was Melchor Gaspar.⁷⁶ It is interesting to notice how the names in this family played around Gaspar and Melchor, and how the pattern was passed over three generations. Another case was Miguel Lucas, who passed his name to his male children Martín Lucas and Lucas Miguel, with the inversion of the names in the second case.⁷⁷ Alternatively in Bartolomé Elías' family the second name Elías was part of all the male names, showing how in some cases second names were used virtually as a surname in the Spanish fashion, this happening more with men.⁷⁸ Indeed, similar cases for women are extremely rare, even if very distinguished families did it

⁷⁴ AHAM, Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733.

⁷⁵ AHAM, Box 1736-7, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737; Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737.

⁷⁶ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720.

⁷⁷ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Miguel Lucas, 1733.

⁷⁸ AGNT 2547, exp. 2, Testament of Bartolomé Elías, 1746.

with the daughters too, as the case of don Juan de la Cruz shows.⁷⁹ He was governor of Tepemaxalco and passed his second name on to all his children, five males and four females. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the second name had been conveyed to him by his mother, María de la Cruz, rather than his father Nicolás Gaspar.

Somewhat distinct is the practice of passing on a distinguished second name among the males of a family virtually in the fashion of a Spanish surname. Antonio de Santiago had two children named Matías de Santiago and Josef de Santiago.⁸⁰ And indeed, passing the name Santiago on to the male children seemed to be very common; it also happened with don Felipe de Santiago, and Bernardino de Santiago, doubtless at least in part because it was a mark of relatively high status.⁸¹ No cases of women bearing this second name have been found, showing how female names were less likely to indicate distinction in status.

Before concluding, two more details can be considered. First, due to the devotion to the Virgin, and the fact that Mary was used as a model of Christian life by the clergy who preached in indigenous communities, we might expect that names which referred to various incarnations of her, apart from the widely used María by itself, would be very common.⁸² In fact, we have only a few examples, such as María de la Encarnación, María Concepción in the will of Ambrosio Lorenzo, and María del Carmen in that of Agustín de la Cruz.⁸³ However, there is an interesting case in the will ordered by María de Guadalupe on behalf of her nephew Mateo de Luna in 1757.⁸⁴ She bore a name that clearly referred to the Virgin; moreover, her husband's name was Andrés de Guadalupe, so both of them were named after the Virgin of Guadalupe. It is very unusual to have both husband and wife with the same second name, and it is not a frequent name at this time; perhaps they had more normal names and later took the name Guadalupe for devotional reasons. The scarcity of names

⁷⁹ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

⁸⁰ AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de Antonio de Santiago", 1726.

⁸¹ AHAM, Box 1728, "Testamento de don Felipe de Santiago", 1728; Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733. For a discussion of the name, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, p. 123.

⁸² Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", pp. 116-7.

⁸³ AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de María de la Encarnación", 1733; Box 1716, "Testamento de Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1715; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Agustín de la Cruz, 1755.

⁸⁴ AHAM, Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757.

adopted after the Marian cult hints at the relatively small impact of preaching in the naming process.

Second, the second name de la Cruz seems to have been extremely popular in the whole Valley, particularly among the people who became officers of the indigenous municipality and church, the distinguished people who were called to be witnesses of wills. It is also found more widely in various wills in the names of children, husbands, and sometimes wives. In these cases as well it seems to be associated with high status. For example, don Baltasar de los Reyes, a very rich man who issued his will in 1681, bequeathed his property to his children, the males being called Antonio de la Cruz and Juan de la Cruz.⁸⁵ Or again, the male children of Elena de Cruz, whom we considered above, Gabriel de la Cruz and Santiago de la Cruz. Or two sons of don Felipe de Santiago, Juan de la Cruz and Antonio de la Cruz, who curiously bore names identical to the children of don Baltasar de los Reyes.⁸⁶ Finally, we find it in don Diego Lorenzo's will, when he refers to his wife, doña Lorenza de la Cruz, as mentioned before. It seems to have been a popular second name in various places in central Mexico, as for instance in early colonial Coyoacan.⁸⁷ However, the Toluca Valley had a quite particular tradition, since in Tepemaxalco for example, as mentioned above with don Juan de la Cruz, there was a single prominent family de la Cruz, members of which were involved in the governorship, church office, *cofradías* and also as notaries.⁸⁸ Due to the fact that it was common to find notaries, *fiscales* or *alcaldes* with the second name de la Cruz in the selected group of wills, it may be assumed that there were other cases similar to Tepemaxalco in the Valley, in the sense that this second name was associated to relatively high status families. Indeed, whereas the general impression about this name has been that it is one of various surnames based on religious elements (like de los Reyes after the Magi), which rank above the double first names and below Spanish-style surnames, in the eighteenth-century Toluca

⁸⁵ AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681.

⁸⁶ AHAM, Box 1728, "Testamento de don Felipe de Santiago", 1728.

⁸⁷ Horn, "Gender and Social Identity", p. 116.

⁸⁸ See the will of Teresa Rojas' collection, AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695; and also the wills presented by James Lockhart, in Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 135-40. For a detailed discussion of the de la Cruz family, see Lockhart, "Capital and Province", p. 119, and *The Nahuas*, pp. 136-38.

Valley de la Cruz would appear to have been the most common way of attempting to assert distinction through name.

Conclusions

The previous analysis has shown how certain specific terms and names were significant in Nahua communities of the eighteenth century in that they were a channel through which aspects of status, rank, and also family traditions and special devotions were transmitted. Investigating roles and relationships through the examination of the terms used for them is a new approach to the indigenous world that allows us to discern subtleties about social organisation generally and the position of women specifically that are not perceptible otherwise.

First of all, the examination of Nahuatl terms for spouse has unveiled the development of a gendered system parallel to the Spanish one but built on the indigenous language. The primary nongendered term for spouse was now used to indicate the husband, and a traditional gendered term indicated the wife. This change from the earlier system of using the same word for husband and wife can be seen as a result of Spanish influence in terms of speech patterns and life in general. It cannot be said to be a development stimulated only by church policy. The clergy can be seen together with the Spanish residents and traders as agents of penetration of Spanish cultural and linguistic influence into the indigenous countryside; both groups used the same vocabulary for kinship relationships and for many other matters relating to everyday life.

Another interesting pattern reflecting the contact with the Spanish world is the use of the term *viuda* to define a widow, with total abandonment of the ancient and early postconquest Nahuatl terms. Widows were a significant group in the issuing of wills. Acknowledging the limits imposed by the absence of data on decedents' status, the fact that they were more numerous than married women leads me to suggest that perhaps they had more freedom in disposing of family property, or that they were forced by the events to carry out a task that was normally assigned to the male head of the family. However, the common practice of each gender mentioning the living

spouse, and in some cases also the deceased, in self-identification shows the importance of each in defining the other, and leaves some room for speculation about the importance of the conception of the couple as a household. In fact, even when using the absolute term *viuda/viudo*, which can serve as a total self-definition, testators had a tendency to name the deceased spouse anyway.⁸⁹

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the detailed analysis of terminology for women's relationships beyond marriage. First, the findings for the Toluca Valley fully confirm the Stage 3 replacement of sibling/cousin terminology by the Spanish equivalents, with a different manner of gender differentiation, which was already recognised as general in central Mexico.⁹⁰ On the other hand, the discovery of a more subtle growth of gender differentiation for children, using indigenous terminology, is entirely new, and is likely to be general in Nahuatl society. Another interesting point concerns the fact that the collateral line seems to be more affected than the direct line in terms of adoption of Spanish-derived vocabulary, stressing gender differentiation according to Spanish practice. It has been noticed worldwide that kin terminology in the direct line is one of the most conservative categories in a given language. Finally, most of the new terminology treats females and males equally, often using the feminine and masculine of the very same term, but *-pil* vs. *-ichpoch* again gives the primary, originally ungendered category to the male alone, following a pattern already seen with *-namic* vs. *-cihuahuatzin*. Indeed, these developments may be part of a larger trend in Nahuatl under Spanish influence over the centuries and across a large area. In the Nahuatl of Guerrero today, the word *tlacatl*, a human being or person of either gender in traditional Nahuatl, is used to mean 'man' specifically.⁹¹

As for naming patterns, we see the continued use of adopted Spanish names, surnames and titles, with a richer differentiation among men. The fact that women shared marks of distinction only in a few cases of high lineage suggests a sort of continuity with the

⁸⁹ Of the eleven cases in which the testator declared he/she was a widower/widow (the actual number of the category as a whole is thirteen, but in two cases female testators did not declare it and it was written somewhere else in the will), there are five cases in which the word *viudo/viuda* was used without the spouse's name to accompany it, while in six cases the spouse's name was added.

⁹⁰ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 81-4.

⁹¹ Personal communication from Jonathan Amith, October 2001.

precolonial tradition of more basic and less varied female names. Moreover, the rarity of cases in which the surname was adopted in the Spanish fashion and passed on to the descendants in a consistent way suggests the persistence of the indigenous habit of using a name to identify an individual, not a lineage or a whole family. Overall, the ongoing evolution and rapprochement of Nahua and Spanish patterns after Stage 2 is not so obvious with naming practices as it is with the words for relationships.

The analysis of terminology and naming patterns has proved to be a useful instrument to disclose women's status and relationships within the family. It is now essential to combine it with a discussion of female inheritance and other social practices in the domestic domain to attain a more rounded even if not complete portrait of women's role and status.

PART II: WOMEN'S RELATIONS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

Part I having explored the implications for women's position of the words and names used to identify them, Part II studies women in actual social practice, in their possessions and in their relations with other family members as seen in actions that they and others took. Since testaments are the main source used here, emphasis naturally falls on inheritance, to which one large section of Part II is devoted. The second section deals with other aspects of social practice relating to women; in view of the source, the discussion is necessarily quite miscellaneous and fragmentary, but it does throw further light on women's position. Part II will be introduced by a general discussion of the household and land regime in the Toluca region in the early eighteenth century, comparing it with Stage 2 to underline the major changes. Although these phenomena were not in themselves gender-specific, they provide a necessary framework and context for understanding women's lives, and they have not previously been studied in depth.

The Household and Its Land

As will become evident through the following analysis, Nahuatl houses were usually complexes. In the sixteenth century and often later as well, they tended to consist of similar separate structures around a patio, each of which was used by a nuclear family, recreating at the household level the principle of cellular organisation typical of the *altepetl*.⁹² To what extent the principle of a special structure for each nuclear family in the household was still observed in early eighteenth-century Toluca is a question for investigation and even speculation; it appears that some change may have occurred in this respect.

Two traditional Nahuatl terms are used in reference to the household. *Calli* (or in the reverential *caltzintli*)⁹³, referring to the physical structure, is the most common word, used equally by women and men. Since Nahuatl normally does not mark the plural for inanimate nouns, the word was traditionally used either for the whole complex or for any single building in it, resulting in much ambiguity. In the present corpus it is increasingly used for a single building, though ambiguities remain. A second word, common but less frequent than *calli*, is *-chan*, always in the possessive form, which can be translated as the English 'home'. Traditionally there was a quite sharp distinction between *calli* as the physical structure and *-chan* as simply the place where one dwells whatever its physical attributes might be, one's home or household. In the present corpus *-chan* is still used in the sense of place of residence, especially when a parent is leaving some land to a child to establish his/her home, to settle down.⁹⁴ However, the two terms seem to be approaching each other in meaning, since there are some cases in which *-chan* could be interpreted as indicating the building.⁹⁵ In no case is there any difference in their use according to gender.

⁹² For a full discussion of the indigenous household, as well as for the terminology here presented, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 59-72.

⁹³ It may be that the reverential, which is also a diminutive at times, has a hidden significance, but it is not apparent in the Toluca corpus, nor for that matter in wills from other times and places.

⁹⁴ AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681; Box 1716, "Testamento de Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1715; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753.

⁹⁵ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695. If the term *-chan* is not too

A house (that is, an individual building within the complex) was normally described first by its orientation to the cardinal directions, with a central patio as an unspoken reference point. Although the matter is never discussed openly, it seems that houses (buildings, and one might be tempted to say rooms) in the early eighteenth-century Toluca area retained the earlier arrangement of having a single door opening on a central patio, and their locations were still given in terms of their "facing" in a certain direction, meaning that their doors opened onto the patio in that direction, so that a building described as facing east was on the west side of the patio. Traditionally, as in the Culhuacan testaments, the building on the north, facing south, had priority, with those facing east and west second in line but common, whereas north-facing buildings, with the sun at the back, were least common.⁹⁶ In the Toluca corpus we observe a change or variation, for when there were one or two buildings, they were more often facing west and east, and only when there were three do we normally find one also facing south, i.e., on the north. Traditionally, again with the Culhuacan Testaments as an example, east and west were given in solar terms, according to the movement of the sun: *iquiçayampa tonatiuh*, where the sun emerges, the east, and *icalaquiampa tonatiuh*, where it enters or goes down, the west. The vocabulary in the Toluca corpus remains entirely the same in this respect. In the traditional manner of expression the other two cardinal directions, north and south, were given by mentioning specific places in the proper direction. In the Toluca corpus these ad hoc expressions have given way to a large extent to the Spanish terms for north and south, whereas the Spanish words for east and west are hardly seen.

A fully developed household complex of Stage 2 was formed by two or three residential buildings, which were occupied by different closely related nuclear families; in addition, there were sometimes other buildings with more specific functions.⁹⁷ Details in the wills of early eighteenth-century Toluca Valley offer little description of residential buildings, making an analysis of possible changes

common in the Toluca corpus, it is even less common in the Testaments of Culhuacan, in which it is essentially used to refer to the place where a family dwells.

⁹⁶ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 61-3.

⁹⁷ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 64-8.

problematical; however, something can be said about certain specific buildings, allowing a better understanding of the whole complex. For instance, in the later sixteenth century and increasingly into the seventeenth, as the popularity and importance of household saints increased, Nahua household complexes came to have what was often called a *santocalli*, a 'saint-house', a separate building where the saints resided just as the family members had their own house.⁹⁸ Of this word no trace is left in the Toluca corpus. Saints abound, however. Very frequent in the corpus is the term *ichantzinco Dios*, literally 'the home of God', which Spanish translators uniformly rendered as *oratorio*, 'oratory'. The actual Spanish loanword is also found in Nahuatl wills. The word 'oratory' itself seems to imply some change in the direction of Spanish notions; rather than a residence for the saints, an *oratorio* was, by the meaning of the word at least, just a place to pray. The change may well have gone beyond the manner of naming the building holding the saints. Indeed, in many of the complexes of the Toluca corpus only two elements were mentioned, the *ichantzinco Dios* or oratory, and a kitchen (to be discussed below), but no residential building. Yet the family groups in the Toluca wills generally seem no smaller than those in the earlier Testaments of Culhuacan. On the face of it, it would seem that these people have no place to live at all. The only likely solution is that the *ichantzinco Dios* was not merely an oratory, but a main residence which also contained an altar or altars with the saints' images. Indeed, that interpretation follows from the passage "cali yca oratorio / a house with an oratory", in one will.⁹⁹ The lack of specificity in the documents prevents firm conclusions or detailed descriptions, but it would seem likely that the Nahua household complex in the Toluca region in the early eighteenth century had moved a bit in the direction of the Spanish pattern of a single main residential building for everyone, including the saints.

It is important to note that *ichantzinco Dios*, 'the home of God', does not refer specifically to saints. It could be compared to a common Stage 2 expression,

⁹⁸ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 66-7.

⁹⁹ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720. In addition, in a lawsuit for adultery, Ambrosio Hipólito reports that his wife and children were sleeping in the oratory when his wife's lover entered the house, showing how the term referred to the whole residential building; see AHAM, Box 1754-55, "Autos hechos a pedimento de Ambrosio Hipólito contra Bernardo Nicolás y Petra Angelina, sobre adulterio".

iquiyahuactzinco ithualtzinco Dios, 'the entryway and patio of God', which meant the entire complex as a unit, a household. That expression, however, does not appear in our corpus. Perhaps *ichantzinco Dios* is its equivalent, now associated more with a main residence than with the entire complex, for in the documents it is clear that the meaning of the word does not include the kitchen and any other buildings; yet it may be of interest to notice that one of the two terms used to refer to oratory is normally employed in connection with the first building in the house complex, as in *caltzinli ychantzinco dios*, 'a house which is the home of God'.

When the terms *ichantzinco Dios* and *oratorio* were not used, there was nevertheless often a reference to the fact that the house was bequeathed together with the saints (five cases in women's wills, ten cases in men's wills). Here we see clearly what was probably true in the other instances as well, that in practice sacred images were kept inside the residents' main dwelling place and bequeathed to the heirs together with the building itself, with the obligation to worship them. The cult of saints proper will be discussed in the following chapter; here attention is drawn to the fact that the new terminology is found equally in women's and men's wills, showing that the cult of images was important for both of them, and similarly houses with oratory were bequeathed to both male and female children.

Another part of the house that was often named was the kitchen, using the Spanish term *cocina*; no indigenous word with a similar meaning is found. The traditional term *cihuacalli*, 'woman-house', had disappeared, and in any case there is no certainty about the exact meaning of *cihuacalli* for the Nahuas; it is more likely to have referred to female ownership and inheritance than to the use of the building.¹⁰⁰ It does seem that this change in terminology may reflect a change in house design, with a more specialised building instead of a nuclear family residence. Given the traditional allocation of household duties, this room was probably primarily the province of women. Stage 2 special terminology for women's possessions has disappeared in the

¹⁰⁰ On *cocina/cihuacalli*, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 65-6. See also Susan Kellogg, "The Woman's Room: Some Aspects of Gender Relations in Tenochtitlan in the Late Pre-Hispanic Period", *Ethnohistory* 42(4) (1995), pp. 563-76.

Toluca corpus, but women seem to have gained an entire building within the compound.

Another part of the house complex, common enough though less frequently mentioned, was the corral (using the Spanish loanword) or enclosure for animals, apparently inside the compound. The indigenous term for an enclosure, *tepancalli*, or 'wall-house', is rarely found in the corpus.¹⁰¹ In the earlier Culhuacan Testaments, on the other hand, we find only *tepancalli*, never corral, and no references to animals being kept in them (see Figure 10).

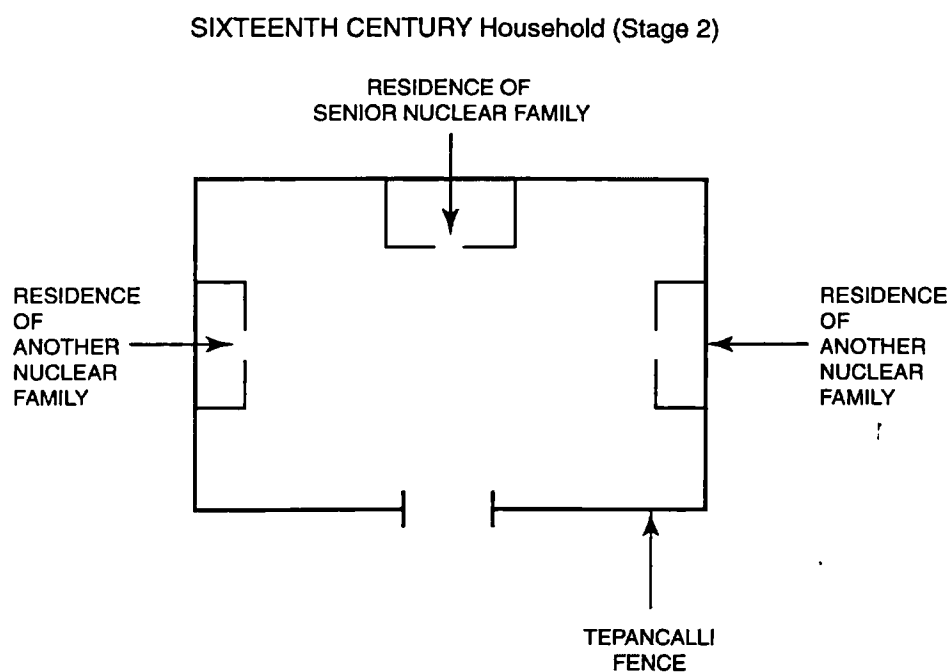
Finally, the household compound normally included some land. Among the several ways that Nahua communities had categorised land tenure, the most basic had long been a distinction between land considered to be part of the household complex, *callalli* or 'house-land', and land beyond the narrow borders of the household, sometimes called *hueca tlalli*, 'distant land'.¹⁰² The former term appears only once or twice in the present corpus and the latter not at all, but the distinction was still very much alive in the Toluca region in the early eighteenth century in the existence of the house lot as opposed to scattered distant fields, and in the different treatment accorded to the two types. For Spaniards the plot of land on which a house was built was a house lot in the narrow sense, while for the Nahuas a lot was also a piece of land for agricultural use. In fact, the traditional term *callalli* referred to something larger and more agricultural than a solar, and the Nahuas seem to have used the term solar more like *callalli*.

Besides the property that was part of the household, testators refer to other lands that seem to be scattered at a certain distance, for they are often described as being in separate *tlaxilacalli* or on different roads, or as abutting on other pieces of land, defined by their owners' names. Indigenous landholdings generally included a piece of land on which the house itself was built, in a somewhat nucleated settlement, plus some land parcels outside the settlement, in the countryside. Often it is not a simple

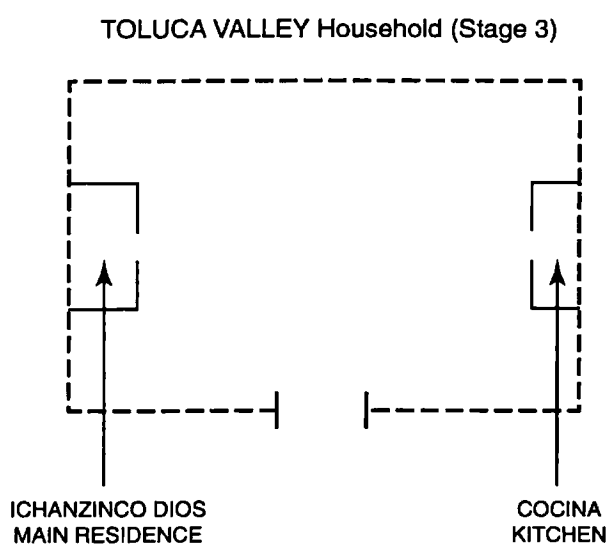
¹⁰¹ Actually it is found only in one testament, AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723.

¹⁰² On these categories for land, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 149-52.

Figure 10: Models of Household



- There were not necessarily three buildings, but when there was even one, it was usually on the north
- There was always an enclosure fence



- Either of these two buildings could be on either east or west; if another was added, it was usually on the north
- No definite evidence has been found for an enclosing fence or wall around the entire compound as in stage 2; a corral for animals was quite often present, but its location is not yet fully understood

matter to distinguish between a lot and a rural parcel; the criterion used here is that a lot is usually mentioned together with the house and often explicitly called part of the compound, while other kinds of landholdings are listed separately. The Nahuatl terms used to describe this second form of landed property include *milli*, or field, cultivated land, and its variation of *milontli*, with the diminutive, or *tlalmilli*, a combination of the words for land and field.¹⁰³ Another common term employed to define parcels of land outside the house complex was *tlalli*, or *tlaltzintli* in the reverential (often in effect diminutive), the general term for land that we have already encountered, with no explicit implication of cultivated land. One might wonder if the terms really refer to distinct types of holdings; it will emerge in the section on women's land inheritance that there may indeed have been a significant difference.

A last point to be mentioned here concerns the ways used to describe and locate parcels of land. No matter what category the parcel fell into, when some details were given about its characteristics, its dimensions were the most common information given.¹⁰⁴ The traditional term used for measurement was the *quahuatl*, a large unit of perhaps seven to ten or more English feet. The word itself is not very common in our corpus, in which dimensions are given mainly through simple numbers, but since the numbers are generally referred to in the traditional twenty units, or a multiple or a division of them (most often ten and sometimes five), we can be sure that the *quahuatl* is the unit being used. At least as common as the use of the *quahuatl* was the practice of defining the size of the land by how much seed could be planted in it using Spanish measures, most commonly the *almud* but occasionally for a huge piece a *fanega*. This practice of using Spanish measures had already penetrated into indigenous communities as early as the seventeenth century if not before.¹⁰⁵ Another way of expressing measure is by furrows; however, they are much less common than *quahuatl*

¹⁰³ So far the more specific significance of *tlalmilli* has not been established; it seems to be used in the same contexts as simple *milli*. It would seem, however, that a *tlalmilli* may be for general cultivation of maize and not developed for any specialty crop.

¹⁰⁴ On the different ways of measuring a parcel of land, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 144-5, and Wood, "Matters of Life", pp. 174-5.

¹⁰⁵ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 166-7. It is possible that this way of speaking just disguises the older way. Actually, Stephanie Wood (personal communication, March 2002) once found that a translator said that two *almudes* is twenty *quahuatl*, so every *almud* would be ten.

and *almudes* and usually are expressed by the Spanish term *surcos*.¹⁰⁶ Finally, there is very little use of the word *vara* to refer to rural lands, this measure being more often associated with a solar. A *vara* is less than half of a *quahuil*, it is not a traditional Nahuatl measurement but Spanish, and it is likely that either the Spaniards themselves in surveying settlement sites, or Nahuas using their procedures, set up lots in *varas*. It may also have implied lots were smaller than rural lands. We can say then, that in all its basic aspects, the indigenous land regime had not changed.

From the descriptions of houses provided in the testaments, it emerges that an indigenous house in early eighteenth-century Toluca was a compound of different and separate rooms, of which the kitchen and a main building with an oratory are the most readily identifiable; then just outside there was the corral, at least in some cases, and usually there was a solar that was considered to belong together with the house. Testators' possessions then usually expanded beyond these borders to include some scattered parcels of land that were distant from the household. In terms of indigenous description either of the house compound or of land, there seem to be no relevant differences between women and men. The complex retained many features from previous centuries, although a general penetration of Spanish influence is suggested by the adoption of terms such as *oratorio*, *cocina*, corral, and solar.

Women and Inheritance

The following discussion of inheritance is divided into subsections treating respectively women and houses, women and land, and women and other property.

¹⁰⁶ According to a Spanish translation of a Nahuatl document in AGNT 2301, exp. 13, there were apparently five furrows or *surcos* to one *quahuil*; I thank James Lockhart and Stephanie Wood for the reference and the deduction.

Women and Houses

Of the 30 women's wills included in the corpus, in eighteen cases women mentioned a house that they owned, while in eleven cases no reference was made. One case stands apart, since the female testator was in reality issuing a will for her nephew; thus she was not disposing of her property and had no occasion to mention it. In the cases of women bequeathing a house, the general impression is that the house is left to a daughter only when she is the only child, or when she is the eldest child and is still in the household, that is, she has not yet left for marriage. In fact, in the majority of the cases the house is left to a male, the eldest son. This impression appears to be strengthened by the case of Pascuala María, who leaves the house to a male grandchild while having a daughter, this may be because her daughter is not living in the *tlaxilacalli* anymore.¹⁰⁷ Another case that strengthens the argument for preference of the eldest male is the will of Isabel María, who has a daughter but leaves the house to her daughter-in-law, wife of her son Luis Francisco, who had died a few months earlier.¹⁰⁸ In this case, the testator's preference for the family that her son has formed prevails over the fact of having a daughter as well. Indeed, in his will Luis Francisco had left his three children in his mother's care inside the house, stipulating that Isabel María would have to pass the house on to the male child at her death. So it seems that the house was Luis Francisco's property, probably bequeathed to him by his father, and Isabel María acted as she did in the will because she had been put in charge of it by her son. Her intention was that the property would ultimately go to Luis Francisco's son.

Needless to say, there are exceptions to this general pattern, and curiously they seem to occur where women show more strength and sense of independence. For instance, Pascuala Melchora leaves the house that her mother had given her to her daughter, giving some hints of the existence of links between generations of females in the transmission of property.¹⁰⁹ The case is especially interesting since she has a son as

¹⁰⁷ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala María, 1762.

¹⁰⁸ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; and the related testament of her eldest son, Box 1731, "Testamento de Luis Francisco", 1731.

¹⁰⁹ AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717.

well, probably the eldest if we assume that the tendency is to name children in chronological order. María Ana de Morales is another example; she bequeaths a house each to her two daughters, despite the fact that there is also a younger-generation male, the grandchild, already grown up.¹¹⁰ Following this line, the most striking example is given by María Josefa, who declares that her house has to be sold in order to pay her debts, showing a good deal of independence in making decisions about her property.¹¹¹ This impression is strengthened by the fact that her husband Adrián Josef did not mention any house in his testament. One can speculate that María Josefa came from a well-off family who gave her the house at the time of her marriage, while it was not provided by her husband who did not consider it his property (see Appendix). There is only one case in which a female testator leaves the house not to her children but to her husband, but the bequest is conditioned by the fact that the husband is directed to take care of the small children, so it can still be said that the house serves the primary purpose of sheltering children and providing continuity.¹¹²

A number of cases in which women do not seem to own a house are quite significant, suggesting that house ownership was not as common for women as for men. In fact, only in ten cases of the 38 men's wills is a house not mentioned, not counting a will that the testator issues on behalf of his sister. Then, in 27 cases a man is bequeathing a house, against the ten cases in which there does not seem to be any house property, while the cases of women are eighteen against eleven. In two of the eleven cases, women possessed some land and other property, while in five cases they possessed land only, and in one case some magueyes. In three cases women had no possessions at all, at least if we judge by the fact that they did not bequeath anything in their wills. A case with different implications is that of María de la Cruz, who did not mention any house, referring only to a lot.¹¹³ However the expression she used, "yni huey solar canpa ocatca tohuehuecha / this big lot where our old (or traditional, or patrimonial) home was", conveys that the solar had long been the home of her family, so probably a

¹¹⁰ AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707.

¹¹¹ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737; and the related testament of her husband, Box 1733, "Testamento de Adrián Josef", 1733.

¹¹² AHAM, Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737.

¹¹³ AGNCi 997, exp. 2, Testament of María de la Cruz, 1736.

house was built on it. Her testament gives us another important detail: she had inherited that solar from her mother, and passed it on to two of her daughters. Again, a case that stresses the transmission of property from female to female across the generations. The cases of absence of house ownership among men seem to be quite similar to those of women; two male testators mention no property at all, two others bequeath only some land, and the last six have some miscellaneous property (images, animals, etc.).

When a man declares possession of a house, it is normally bequeathed to his children; only rarely is it left to the wife, this happening only when the children are too young, so that the wife has to raise them, or when there are no children. A good example of such a case is a family cluster of San Pablo Tepemaxalco: Jacinto de la Cruz leaves a house to his wife Polonia María, mentioning no children at all.¹¹⁴ A few years later, she leaves the same house plus a lot to her nephew, the only younger-generation relative mentioned. So the wife bequeathed the same house she had received from her husband to a nephew because they had no children, at least no living ones. Also, she passed on to him a lot that was perhaps her personal property, since it is not brought up in her husband's will. Again, in the majority of men's testaments the house is left to a son, usually the eldest, at least among males. Rarely is the house left to a daughter, basically in three cases only: Ambrosio Lorenzo, who also has male children, so that the daughter is probably the eldest; Sebastián de Santiago, who leaves half the house to his daughter and half to his grandson; and Pedro Pablo, who also leaves the house to both a male and a female.¹¹⁵ Therefore, there is only one case in which the house is left entirely to a daughter.

In conclusion, it can be said that generally the house was left to the eldest child, usually to the male, probably to assure family continuity and to help the son to form a new family through marriage. When possible, that is, when the testator was quite well off, a house was given also to the other children to help them get started with their new

¹¹⁴ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710.

¹¹⁵ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1715; Box 1731, "Testamento de Sebastián de Santiago", 1731; Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737.

families.¹¹⁶ This would also help explain why daughters usually did not receive a house.¹¹⁷ A final example that supports these conclusions is provided by the family cluster of San Miguel Chapultepec that we have already encountered.¹¹⁸ At the time of his death, Marcos de la Cruz left his home and lot to one of his little sons, probably the eldest, ignoring the little daughter. A few years later, when the wife Paulina María issued her will, the two sons had died, so she left the house and lot to the daughter. It is curious to see how husband and wife used exactly the same expression “*nosolar yhua nocha / my lot and my home*”; I tend to think that they were referring to the same house and lot, that the wife considered them as hers, since when her husband died the children were little and she had to take care of everything.

Women and Land

In moving from the household to a broader perspective, it is useful to start by analysing land ownership associated with the household. Of a total of eighteen cases in which women bequeathed a house, in twelve they also left a piece of land (or more than one) that went with it, as part of the compound. Following Spanish usage, this piece of land should be called a solar, or lot, a term that specifically refers to a plot intended primarily for house construction. Here in five cases the land is called *tlalli* or *tlaltzintli* (simply ‘land’), in five other cases solar, in one case *xolal* (a Nahuatl naturalisation of solar). In practice there appears to be no difference in the use of the terms solar and *tlalli*. In one case out of the twelve the house is accompanied by magueyes only, with no mention of land. Finally, in one last case the traditional expression *callalli*, or land that goes with the house, is used.¹¹⁹

Of the 27 cases in which men bequeathed a house, in eighteen it was accompanied by a piece of land, so the practice appears common to both genders. In eight cases the

¹¹⁶ Two examples of the case are: AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753, where the brother is asked to set up homes for the children when they are grown up.

¹¹⁷ See the article by McCaa, “Child Marriage”, pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁸ AGNT 2543, exp. 6, Testament of Paulina María, 1756, and AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753.

¹¹⁹ This last case is AHAM, Box 1738, “Testamento de Elena de la Cruz”, 1711.

land is called *tlalli*, in nine solar, and in one *milli*. Leaving aside *milli* (meaning cultivated field), which will be considered in the following paragraph, again it seems the words *tlalli* and solar were used to refer to the same thing, *tlalli* being the general term in the indigenous language, and solar being taken from Spanish but apparently used in an expanded sense.

With the analysis of *milli*, cultivated fields, we move to the category of land parcels outside the compound proper. In women's testaments ten cases have been found of women bequeathing some cultivated field, and the general pattern is that fields were bequeathed to sons, while daughters received this kind of land only when there were no male children.¹²⁰ If there were both male and female children, daughters either did not receive any fields or got smaller *milli*.¹²¹ An exception here is Antonia María, who bequeathed two equivalent fields to her son and daughter, also specifying that her daughter inherited a field that came from her late mother's property.¹²² The case is extremely interesting because it indicates the transmission of property through the female line across the generations. Only in one case did a woman leave a field to her husband, even if only half, while the other half was for her son, probably because the child was still very young and needed the father's help. Similarly, in another case a field was given to a brother to take care of small children.¹²³

As for *tlalli*, the more general term for land, thirteen female testators bequeathed some *tlalli* beyond the household complex, three of them owning some fields or *milli* in addition, particularly Elena de la Cruz, who has already been indicated as a wealthy woman (see Appendix).¹²⁴ In at least four of the cases here discussed the term solar or lot is also used even though the land was not related to any house. In the cases where the land referred to was not explicitly for cultivation, it seems that it was bequeathed

¹²⁰ AHAM, Box 1699, "Testamento de Juana Francisca", 1699; Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; AGNT 2543, exp. 6, Testament of Paulina María, 1756.

¹²¹ AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Testament of Nicolasa Albarrán, 1737; AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766.

¹²² AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753.

¹²³ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ana María", 1716; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753.

¹²⁴ The other two cases are: AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766, who left some *tlalli* to her grandchildren and some fields to her children; and AGNT 2298, exp. 3, Testament of Petrona Magdalena, 1732.

equally to both male and female children, or to younger generations in general (example of Elena de la Cruz), certainly more equally than in the case of *milli*. Only once did a female testator leave some *tlalli* to her husband, but with the obligation that he had to raise the children.¹²⁵ Taking into account that the cases of women bequeathing some land designated as *milli* or *tlalli* are 23, of which three fall into both categories, the total comes to twenty out of 30 women's wills, so that we can say that women's ownership of land was quite common.

The conclusions reached can be strengthened through a comparative analysis of the men's testaments that are part of the corpus. The term *milli* for cultivated field is mentioned in sixteen wills, the more general term *tlalli* or land in twenty, while eight cases overlap, since the testator had both *milli* and *tlalli*. This gives a total of 28 men's wills out of 38 in which landed property is mentioned, a very similar proportion to the one for women. Therefore it can be said generally that it was quite normal for at least a group of both females and males to own land and bequeath it.

Reference to cultivated fields is found in sixteen men's testaments, and a few times *miltontli* is used (the normal form with diminutive), while *tlalmilli* occurs in two cases. One of them is Juan Crisóstomo's will, in which also *memilli* is used, a specific form that combines *milli* with *metl*, for magueyes.¹²⁶ Four men left a field to the wife, but only because she was to raise small children, while in only one case is a field left to the wife just for herself, and again it is the special case of Juan Crisóstomo. Therefore, in the majority of the cases fields were left to children, as happened in women's wills too. Moreover, in men's testaments as well a prevalence of sons over daughters in the inheritance of cultivated land can be seen, with daughters not receiving any fields, apart from the case of an only child, or getting less compared to their brothers.¹²⁷ Reality cannot be exempt from exceptions, of course, and here there are two, Juan Crisóstomo and Lucas Damián, who bequeathed fields to both sons and daughters

¹²⁵ AHAM, Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737.

¹²⁶ AHAM, Box 1700-1, "Testamento de Juan Crisóstomo", 1701.

¹²⁷ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Miguel Lucas, 1733; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan, 1712; AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681.

equally.¹²⁸ Finally, compared to female testators, men seemed more inclined to leave some fields to other members of the family, including sisters, brothers, nephews and nieces, and godchildren as well.

As for the category of *tlalli*, the term is used in twenty men's wills, actually in three cases the word used is solar or lot instead of *tlalli*, but no connection with a house is indicated. One may speculate on the type of solar not apparently associated with a house: it may be an empty lot in the settlement, also it may be quite small, and for specialty crops, more like a *milli*, but since uncertainty exists, it will be considered along with the general term (*tlalli*). Two men left *tlalli* to their wife to raise small children, while two other men did so because there were no children, and only in one case was a piece left to the wife for herself.¹²⁹ Moreover, a testator bequeathed some land to his mother, to be passed on then to his younger brother, and another testator left land to his sister and brother to share. As already underlined for women's testaments, it seems that land under the category of *tlalli* was left more equally to both sons and daughters, and generally to younger generations. However, there are some cases in which a sort of preference for sons can be observed.¹³⁰

In general then, there is no great difference between women and men in bequeathing land, in the sense that both genders seem to leave cultivated fields to sons more than to daughters, while parcels of land that have a less determined function (*tlalli*) are bequeathed more equally among the children. This may lead to some speculation about the preponderant role played by men in agricultural practices. It is significant that in giving land measurements by seed capacity the Nahua testators often say *tlaolli* or *tlaolli xinachtli* ('maize', 'maize seed'), etc., indicating specifically that the land was normally sown in maize, which we might suspect. The different inheritance patterns for *milli* and plain *tlalli* would imply that *tlalli* mainly means less developed, possibly currently not used land. However, it should be remembered that *tlalli* was

¹²⁸ AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696.

¹²⁹ AHAM, Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733.

¹³⁰ AHAM, Box 1728, "Testamento de don Felipe de Santiago", 1728, in which he left no land at all to daughters; and three cases in which daughters (or granddaughter) got less land compared to sons (or grandson): AGNT 2301, exp. 9, Testament of Guillermo Martín, 1737; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692; AGNT 2547, exp. 2, Testament of Bartolomé Elías, 1746.

also used in reference to a house lot; in that case it appears that the Nahuas thought of *tlalli* primarily as land one could potentially plant something on, not just as a place for a house, just as with their traditional *callalli*. Since previous research has not examined gender patterning in land inheritance as closely as is done in the present study, and no one has investigated possible differences between *tlalli* and *milli* at all, it is not possible at this time to say to what extent the patterns I have found follow those of earlier times or have changed from them.

An important conclusion is that women as well as men could own land quite easily; there is no large gap between the genders in this respect. Women could possess some land also when it did not come from their husband or husband's family, rather when it seems to be their personal property or have come from the woman's family; and this kind of land was more likely to be passed on to female heirs. The now familiar family cluster from San Miguel Chapultepec gives an illuminating example. First of all, the wife Paulina María leaves to her daughter, the only one left after the two sons died, two fields that her husband Marcos de la Cruz bequeathed to the two sons a few years earlier. This situation reinforces the finding that fields were more readily left to sons than to daughters when children of both genders were alive. Moreover, Paulina María also bequeaths ten furrows that a don Juan Martín had left her to the same daughter, and twelve more furrows to her nephew. While some suspicion may remain that the ten furrows were the same that her husband had inherited from his grandfather, the twelve furrows do not appear at all in Marcos de la Cruz's will, so they can be deemed to be Paulina's personal property, perhaps something that her family had given her at time of marriage.¹³¹

¹³¹ Another similar case in AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710 and Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693, the family cluster from San Pablo Tepemaxalco. No children are mentioned in their testaments, and the husband left a house to his wife, then she left it to a nephew, together with a lot that Jacinto de la Cruz did not bring up in his will, so maybe it was Polonia María's personal property. Moreover, she left some more land half to a nephew and half to a sister-in-law, and it is not possible to determine whether it was her property or the piece of land that was mentioned in Jacinto de la Cruz's will.

Women and Other Property

Bequests of houses and land were the most common and important manifestations of inheritance in both women and men's testaments. Yet it is not possible to conclude an analysis of the possessions passed on to heirs without mentioning the other kinds of property that are seen in the wills at times. First of all, it might be expected that women would bequeath pottery, *metates*, weaving tools, and all sort of instruments they used to carry out their everyday activities. In Stage 2 documents, such household items were referred to as *cihuatlatquiltl*, or 'woman property', and in fact this term is very common in the Culhuacan Testaments, but the word seems to have disappeared by the early eighteenth century, at least in our corpus.¹³² It is not only a matter of terminology, however, since our testators did not descend to the level of petty objects as much. Some references are still present to things such as chests or boxes (using the Spanish loanword *caja*), where people could store their belongings; chests can be found in both women's and men's testaments, and both genders generally bequeathed them to daughters, even if the already known Elena de la Cruz left one to her son. Actually, in her will we also find some references to *metates*, or grinding stones, typically used by women, which were left to sons as well as daughters (see Appendix). This may be a special case, perhaps determined by the fact that the woman was wealthy and intended to provide all her children with the possessions that were deemed necessary to set up a new household. Another common item in terms of women's activities was the grainbin, or *cuezcomatl*, and again the testaments contain some curious details, since contrary to all expectation, grainbins were more numerous in men's wills and were left to both daughters and sons.¹³³ A last mention of utensils that can generally be considered as part of 'woman property' concerns a wooden container, probably a deep tray or trough, or possibly a drinking vessel (*quauhxicalli*) that Juana Francisca left to her daughter.¹³⁴ Female clothing may be something that we

¹³² Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, Documents 37, 38, 43, 49. See also Kellogg, *Law*, 124-5, 141-2.

¹³³ AGNT 2541, exp. 9, Testament of Lucía María, 1731; AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695; AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681.

¹³⁴ AHAM, Box 1699, "Testamento de Juana Francisca", 1699.

could expect to find in women's testaments; however, in the present corpus such references are present in only one will, that of Isabel María, who bequeathed a skirt of soft hair or fur to her daughter-in-law, the wife of her eldest son, and a soft *huipil* to her daughter.¹³⁵

Isabel María's will helps us to elucidate another important matter, the bequest of animals, which seems to have been generally quite common in the Valley despite the high value of this kind of property, but for men rather than for women. Only three women's testaments refer to the ownership of some kind of animals. Isabel María left a cow each to her daughter-in-law and daughter, while doña Agustina Francisca gave some sheep and a mule to her son, and a yoke of oxen more specifically to her son together with his wife.¹³⁶ The most striking example is again Elena de la Cruz, who left an ox each to almost all of her children, both males and females, and especially three donkeys, four pigs and a yoke of oxen to her daughter-in-law, once again the wife of the eldest son (see Appendix). According to these cases, it seems that animals were left to both daughters and sons, but it has to be taken into account that for Isabel María the two female heirs were the only ones alive, and the daughter-in-law got most of the property probably by virtue of her marriage to Isabel María's son. The same happened with Elena de la Cruz's daughter-in-law. These details open up another interpretation, that animals were given preferably to sons or sons' families, or that there was some difference in the bequest of different kinds of animals, as can be seen more clearly through a brief reference to men's testaments.

First of all, references to all sort of animals were more numerous in men's wills, emphasising that ownership of animals was more common for men than for women. Moreover, it seems that those animals that were more linked to cultivation, such as oxen, were bequeathed mainly to sons; in fact, oxen were mentioned in cases of daughters only when sons had already received some animals.¹³⁷ In three cases some oxen were left to a wife, but only in relation to her responsibility of raising small

¹³⁵ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731.

¹³⁶ AGNT 2530, exp. 6, Testament of doña Agustina Francisca, 1737.

¹³⁷ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692; AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681, and Box 1728, "Testamento de don Felipe de Santiago", 1728.

children, to whom they would probably pass later.¹³⁸ Other animals typically given to sons were horses, particularly with all their tackle, ready to be used for masculine tasks. More often daughters were bequeathed some sheep, or cows, the kind of animals that were not directly employed in field cultivation.¹³⁹ As already happened with the analysis of other kinds of possessions, the general patterns just unveiled are not without exception. The first one is given by don Juan Alonso, who bequeathed some yokes of oxen to male children, it is true, but also a single ox to each of his daughters.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps the fact that he did not leave a full yoke to them may help support the general impression that sons were the privileged ones where agricultural activities were concerned since a single ox could not be of assistance in ploughing. A more obvious exception is the one provided by the will of don Juan de la Cruz, who left not only two yokes of oxen but also a horse with saddle to each of his children, both male and female.¹⁴¹ However, in this case we are in the presence of an extremely wealthy and distinguished person, who could afford to divide his possessions among all the children, even if it is worthy of note that he treated them equally.¹⁴²

Finally, magueyes were a very common and important possession that was often passed on to future generations, especially for women, but since they are closely related to an activity that indigenous women carried out in a more open or public context, they will be discussed in the following chapter.

General Remarks on Inheritance and Women

Despite the variety of property bequeathed and heirs, some general conclusions can be drawn about inheritance practices in relation to women. The overall impression is that it was common for both women and men to possess a house and some related land and

¹³⁸ AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681; Box 1710-12, "Testamento de Pascual Francisco", 1710; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695.

¹³⁹ AHAM, Box 1748-49, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681; Box 1728, "Testamento de don Felipe de Santiago", 1728; AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696.

¹⁴⁰ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692.

¹⁴¹ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

¹⁴² A last detail in relation to animals deserves some mention. In almost all the cases when oxen were bequeathed, the term *escaramán* appears together with the bequest. Its origin and meaning is still obscure, but it seems to be a sort of tool or attachment that goes together with the use of the animal.

to transmit them to the heirs, even if house ownership tended to be somewhat more frequent in men's wills. These possessions were normally bequeathed to the eldest child, usually a son, apparently to assure the continuation of family group. The impression is strengthened by the fact that in some cases, when the eldest son had died, the house and lot were given to his surviving wife even though she was not a direct member of the family.

In the case of land parcels outside the house compound proper, differences get more complex. Both genders commonly owned cultivated fields (*milli*) and parcels with less determined functions (*tlalli*), but inheritance practices show some difference in terms of the gender of heirs. Cultivated fields were bequeathed preferably to sons, perhaps because of the predominant role of men in agriculture, while *tlalli* were left more equally to both sons and daughters; yet in men's wills, a sort of preference for sons is visible even with *tlalli*. It follows then that there was no restriction on women's possession and bequest of houses and land, but when it came to inheriting them as daughters, they suffered some disadvantages compared to their brothers. Yet various cases have been found in which the general rule of bequeathing house and land (connected or not) preferably to sons was broken, and in some of them the decision was taken by a female testator who seemed to show a strong sense of independence. Moreover, these women tended to pass on to their daughters some possessions that had already belonged to their mothers, confirming the existence of house and land ownership transmission from female to female across generations.

Houses and land were the most widespread possessions to be bequeathed. Almost no mention was made of household goods, especially female clothing and tools usually employed by women in their everyday activities, objects that were very common in wills from Stage 2. This is already a significant change compared to previous times, and it is strengthened by the fact that the few household objects mentioned seem to be left equally to both daughters and sons, whereas one would expect them to have been the prerogative of female heirs due to the separate spheres of activities in which the two genders were involved.

A category of possession that seems to stand quite apart is that of animals. First of all, it is significant that animals seem to be a fairly common possession at least among quite wealthy families, despite their high value; perhaps this may be related to the fact that animal breeding was an important activity in the Toluca Valley. In the selected corpus of wills, animal ownership was more frequent among male than among female testators, and different kinds of animals were bequeathed to different heirs. Oxen, who were linked to agriculture, and horses were normally given to sons, while sheep and cows went to daughters. Once again, the predominance of men's involvement in agricultural activities is shown here.

Besides the general remarks that can be made on inheritance patterns for women, it is extremely important to notice that, despite some evolution, the whole household complex and land regime that testaments have revealed remained very similar to what they had been at least since the conquest and doubtless before. Although absolute proof is lacking and probably can never be provided, it would seem that the gender aspects of inheritance belonged to that household complex and, whatever influence they had undergone, were at least in part equally ancient. As has been demonstrated throughout this section, males were preferred in certain ways, but there were no absolute distinctions as to what one gender or the other could inherit, and in making bequests females and males acted similarly within a general strategy for the next generation.

Other Female Social Practices Revealed by Testaments

Part II concludes with some short references to other social practices that are identifiable through a close analysis of testaments. The documents do not yield systematic information; for example, we find out little about the daily routine of the household. It is important, however, to learn as much as we can about the context in which the Nahua women of the Toluca Valley lived and operated. These details provide information on status and roles of native women and their reaction to Spanish cultural influence.

Women, Children and Custodial Function

In the great majority of wills the testator mentions her or his children, or at least some of them, suggesting how crucial children were in terms of inheritance and continuation of the family.¹⁴³ In fact, as has already been shown, in most cases a substantial portion of the inheritance was assigned to them. Sometimes not all the children of a testator were indicated in her/his will, as appears from related documents that contain further details on a given family. Surveying the corpus of testaments as a whole, one can deduce that it was quite common to omit infants who did not inherit any property (apparently parents were not confident that babies would survive), as well as children who had already married and left home. Nicolasa Albarrán for example mentions only her son in the will, while from a document her husband issued for the sale of a piece of land, we learn that she also has a daughter, Josefa Angelina.¹⁴⁴ The fact that she is married and has already left the house may explain why the mother does not consider her and bequeaths her property to the son, who still needs family support. Normally testators mentioned children only when they were leaving some bequest to them, or when they were putting them in charge of their burial or funeral.

When no children at all are referred to in a will, very often grandchildren are found instead, suggesting the existence of a connection between generations despite the fact that one was missing. Grandchildren essentially replace the children. Perhaps the testator's children had died early, leaving their own children to the care of the grandparents. In some cases the grandchildren are already grown up, and the importance given to inheritance in the direct line is seen. Sometimes, when nephews are the only heirs, or there is no mention of any younger members of the family, we may assume that there are no surviving heirs in the direct line or that the couple never had children at all.¹⁴⁵ When they are present in lieu of children, grandchildren of both

¹⁴³ Twenty women's wills and 28 men's wills have references to children.

¹⁴⁴ AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Testament of Nicolasa Albarrán, 1737; AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Document issued by Mateo Nicolás, 1730; AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766.

¹⁴⁵ Example of the family cluster in AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710 and Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693.

genders receive both the benefits and the duties of the missing children; not only did they receive bequests, but they were asked to provide the testator's burial or mass.¹⁴⁶

The importance given to children and to younger relatives in general throws light on a significant practice in which women have a key role, the custodial function. If small children were present at the time a testament was issued, testators of both genders entrusted them to a specific person who could raise and educate them and make sure they had all they needed to set up a household. In some cases the same thing happened with grandchildren. It is of interest to examine which gender was more prone to assign a custodian, and who was the person normally chosen as tutor. In the corpus references to a custodial function occur more in men's wills than in women's, fourteen against nine cases, even if the difference is not striking due to the larger number of male testators. However, one may speculate that perhaps female testators did not feel pressure to recommend their children to somebody because a female network was in operation and female relatives would almost automatically replace the mother when needed. Male testators, on the other hand, seemed to fear that their wives would abandon the house after their death, so they wanted to underline the importance of taking care of their children.¹⁴⁷ In other cases they entrusted their children to relatives even though their wives were still alive, showing that there was some trouble in the relationship and they wanted to be sure that somebody would raise them.

If we consider the person who was put in charge of children, some interesting details emerge. As for female testators, in five cases they mentioned a man as tutor, and in only one of these cases was it the husband;¹⁴⁸ otherwise they chose their executor, their brother, or in one case a man whose relation with the testator was not given.¹⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that of these women, only one, Antonia María, had a husband, but

¹⁴⁶ AGNT 2547, exp. 2, Testament of Bartolomé Elías, 1746, in which two grandchildren are to bury and shroud the testator, whose children are not mentioned; AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de María de la Encarnación", 1733, who does not bequeath any property but issues the will only to entrust her burial and funeral to her granddaughter.

¹⁴⁷ Particularly AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695; and AGNT 2616, exp. 7, Testament of don Pascual Domingo, 1724.

¹⁴⁸ AHAM, Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737.

¹⁴⁹ AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753, AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766, AGNT 2298, exp. 3, Testament of Petrona Magdalena, 1732, and AHAM Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737 (no relation given).

preferred to entrust her brother with the care of children. The documents reveal that two other women were widows, and for another case as well we have reason to believe that the woman was a widow. Ana María did not explicitly entrust her child to her husband, but left to the two of them her possessions to share, so a sort of custodial function may have been involved.¹⁵⁰ In the remaining three cases, to reach the total of nine, the female testator referred to a daughter-in-law to raise her grandchildren, or a daughter to take care of a small child, or again to the fact that her grandchildren were to be raised in her house, without mentioning any specific person as tutor.¹⁵¹

Turning to male testators, generally the person referred to was a woman, precisely in eleven of the fourteen cases. It seems that the wife was the one usually chosen, an obvious choice as mother of the children; in eight cases she was specifically entrusted with their care, and in one case she was mentioned only as sharing property with children, but even here the custodial function is implicit. However, the fact that something as natural as a mother taking care of her children was specified in the wills leads us to think that perhaps some wives did not do it. When the wife was not mentioned, presumably because she had already died, the male testator referred to other members of the family, such as a sister, or also male members, a brother in one case, and an uncle in another.¹⁵² Finally, there are two quite atypical cases in which the testator chose a relative as tutor even though his wife was still alive. Luis Francisco entrusted his children to his mother Isabel María before dying in 1731, without mentioning his wife, but from the mother's testament a few months later we discover that the wife was still alive.¹⁵³ A quite similar situation happened with Guillermo Martín, who mentioned his wife in the testament but put his father in charge of raising his children.¹⁵⁴ These two cases lead to the conclusion that probably there was some trouble within the marriage, so the husband felt more secure trusting his parents rather than his wife with the care of small children.

¹⁵⁰ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ana María", 1716.

¹⁵¹ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1736-37, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737; Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737.

¹⁵² AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737; Box 1756, "Testamento de Juan de los Santos", 1756; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Miguel Lucas, 1733.

¹⁵³ AHAM, Box 1731, "Testamento de Luis Francisco", 1731; Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731.

¹⁵⁴ AGNT 2301, exp. 9, Testament of Guillermo Martín, 1737.

Women, Godparents and Godchildren

A sort of custodial function was also implied in ritual relationships, through the bond between godparents and the children they accompanied at baptism. However, the relationship between parents and godparents also proved to be important (even if not mentioned too frequently in the corpus), according to the cases we have already seen in Part I. María Josefa states in her will that she owes some money to her *comadre*, precisely 3 pesos (see Appendix).¹⁵⁵ Or Vicenta Teresa declares she was given a piece of land by her *comadre* but later had to pay for it.¹⁵⁶ In both cases the 'financial' aspect of the relationship is stressed; dependence took the form of offering or lending money. Moreover, it is relevant to notice that in almost all the cases in which ritual coparents are mentioned in the corpus of wills (apart from the two cases above and the cluster below, only one mention of a *compadre* has been found and only in reference to the borders of a field), women were the protagonists, in the sense that the relation referred to was between a female testator and a *comadre*.¹⁵⁷ This may be another important detail toward the reconstruction of female networks of solidarity and activities that linked women of the same family.

A slightly different case is the one of the family cluster from San Miguel Chapultepec that we have already examined in Part I and then encountered on other occasions. We already know that Marcos de la Cruz died a few years before his wife, leaving three children. In his testament he gives proof of a deep attachment to his *comadre*, possibly a Spanish woman due to the name *señora* Inés, by giving her a piece of land and some clothing, at the same time entrusting her with his burial and mass. This last point is of great interest since his wife was still alive, and burial and mass were usually entrusted to the wife when the children were too small to take care of such things. No further details are given, so it is difficult to discover the reason behind Marcos de la Cruz's decision; perhaps the *comadre* had much more money than the wife and could guarantee a proper ceremony; or the sentimental bond was simply so tight that the

¹⁵⁵ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

¹⁵⁶ AHAM, Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737.

¹⁵⁷ The case referred to is AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720.

testator found it natural to entrust such an important matter to her. The situation is even more intriguing if we consider that, a few years later, the wife Paulina María delegates to her *compadre* Antonio de la Cruz the fulfilment of her will and the application of a fine to all who should dare to violate it. Her husband having died, Paulina María's decision seems more understandable, since she probably felt the need to guarantee the execution of her testament through the support of a male figure, notably more effective than a female in matters of this kind. However, it is clear that for both men and women, ritual coparents were important resources to call on in crucial moments such as disposing of their properties and burial.

How Women Chose Executors and Witnesses

Another social practice that can be observed through testaments is the reference to executors of the will and witnesses of the document itself, and particularly the way in which native women used them and whom they chose. Generally, both executors and witnesses were distinguished persons, as can be understood from the title *don*, or from important second names such as de los Santos, de los Reyes, de la Cruz, or Spanish family names. In a few cases, the name was preceded by the term *señor*, meaning that the person was probably a Spaniard.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, often their names were accompanied by the post they occupied in the local administration or church, in which cases it is even more evident that they were important persons within the community.

While witnesses were always mentioned, some testators either male or female omitted the designation of the executor, suggesting that it was not an indispensable role, especially if it was clear enough who had to carry out the testator's will within a family group. A testator could appoint one or more executors, and the term normally found in the will was the Spanish *albacea*, which was adopted by the Nahuas since they did not issue written testaments in preconquest time, and therefore did not have any specific term for this function.¹⁵⁹ The designation of an executor was usually

¹⁵⁸ AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707; Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737.

¹⁵⁹ On the role of witnesses and *albaceas* in testaments, see Juan N. Rodríguez de San Miguel, *Pandectas hispano-mexicanas*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: UNAM, 1980), pp. 653-4, 674-8.

accompanied by the expression 'If he does it well, God will reward him', probably taken from a Spanish formula, though it is repeated more insistently than in Spanish documents. Both female and male testators usually chose men as executors; in four cases males appointed their brother, or brothers, and in one case a fellow father-in-law, or *consuegro*, while in the other cases officials or distinguished persons were chosen.¹⁶⁰ In women's wills no reference to relatives as executors has been found, apart from Elena de la Cruz, who again represents a striking exception; in fact, not only did she choose two relatives, but also two women, her two daughters María Hernández and Rosa María (see Appendix). This detail further strengthens the impression we already had that Elena was a very strong and independent woman who gave some privileges to her daughters compared to sons. However, the majority of women appointed men as executors, at times adding very human details, as with Josefa Angelina, who recommended that her executor treat her children as if they were his.¹⁶¹ Another exception in the corpus is in the will of Lucas de la Cruz, who has a woman as executor, María de la Encarnación, but his relation with her is not given.¹⁶² A quite different case that is worth mentioning is the document issued by María de Guadalupe, on behalf of her deceased nephew; in fact, despite affirming that her husband don Andrés de Guadalupe is to be the executor, she is the one who makes dispositions concerning her nephew's possessions and heirs.¹⁶³

With witnesses, the situation was similar in the sense that very rarely were women chosen to play this role. This was a significant change since the Culhuacan Testaments of the late sixteenth century are full of female witnesses. It seems that the Spanish view that women's testimony was less effective than men's had come to prevail. Male witnesses were more desirable if they had some official post, and even more desirable if they were Spanish, as previously mentioned; a clear example of that is María Josefa's will, in which three Spanish men were called as witnesses; this was a hint of the distinction of the testator, who came from a prominent family, that of the familiar

¹⁶⁰ AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Juan Rafael", 1732; Box 1737, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737; Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733; Box 1756, "Testamento de Juan de los Santos", 1756; AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723.

¹⁶¹ AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766.

¹⁶² AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695.

¹⁶³ AHAM Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757.

cluster of San Miguel Aticpac (see Appendix).¹⁶⁴ Again both female and male testators seem to share the same attitude when choosing their witnesses, although there is a slightly greater tendency in men's wills to call on officials of the municipal government or of the local church organisation. A significant exception to the general pattern just mentioned is Mateo Serrano, who has three female witnesses among others, and one of them seems to be his daughter.¹⁶⁵

Conclusions on Social Practices

This last section has revealed some interesting aspects of women's position within household and indigenous society in a broader sense. First of all, it has shown how children and more generally members of the succeeding generations were equally important for both genders in matters of the continuity of the family and transmission of ownership. However, the custodial function in relation to children and grandchildren was more likely to be carried out by women than by men; the cases of female tutors are more numerous. This fact seems to correspond to the traditional role that women played inside the household, but the striking aspect here is that it was quite common for the husband to make a specific recommendation or exhortation in his testament that his wife take care of children; therefore it seems that this typical female function was not so peacefully accepted in all cases, and that some women tended to leave the house and children at the husband's death.

Moreover, the analysis of the custodial function offers some glimpses of doubtless significant but elusive networks of solidarity and support among women of the same family or kin group. Hints of such connections have been seen in female testators entrusting their children to other women, and also in the relation between *comadres*, who are seen to rely on one another in terms of lending and borrowing money and other financial dealings. Finally, a social arena from which women seem to be partially cut off is that of acting as executors and witnesses of testaments, since in the great majority of the cases these functions were assigned to men. The fact that women

¹⁶⁴ AHAM Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

¹⁶⁵ AGNT 2523, exp. 5, Testament of Mateo Serrano, 1703.

were scarcely called as witnesses of a will is a significant change compared to the sixteenth century, and is an example of the penetration of Spanish legal practices.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

A close examination of the terminology used to describe women and of social practices of inheritance as seen in testaments reveals something very similar in both realms. In each case women and men operate within the same general framework in such a way that for nearly every category there are parallel terms for both genders, that in nearly every type of possession and inheritance both genders participate on a similar basis in principle, and that the absolute differences though substantial are not huge. Nevertheless, in both realms males are given a sometimes subtle, sometimes rather blatant primacy. It seems to have to do with a certain notion of how a household should best operate to assure that the members of the next generation can continue in the same fashion.

An essential element that emerges from the present chapter is that both the social terminology concerning women and the household organisation within which they existed clearly go back at least to the sixteenth century in their essentials and have not been revolutionised. With the Culhuacan Testaments as a reference point, we have seen a very substantial amount of change within a still existing older framework, but much of it had happened far back in the seventeenth century, and we can also presume that it would hardly have come to the attention of Spanish ecclesiastics and is more likely to have been brought about by the Nahuas being in contact with the Spanish world generally in life and work. Of the ecclesiastical influence that is readily visible, a great deal of it can be seen to go back to the introductions of the sixteenth century and it is very similar in the Culhuacan Testaments, as in the case of funeral practices. Some major change has occurred in terms of the cult of Catholic saints, but this matter is going to be tackled in the next chapter.

Although using testaments to investigate developments in the Toluca region in the first half of the eighteenth century has identified the continuing penetration of various Spanish elements, it has also supported the view that the household and the local indigenous land regime were the sector least affected by Spanish influence.¹⁶⁶ In other words, it does not seem that Nahuas at the family level reorganised their way of life by applying the model promoted by the Catholic Church in the period after 1700; indigenous household and family were not so malleable, at least not in a direct way, and a re-elaboration of Christian concepts occurred rather than massive reorganisation.

¹⁶⁶ See Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, p. 432.

Chapter 5: The Household and Beyond

One of the main aims of this study is to see the extent to which Spanish official policy and action, particularly Church policy and action, affected the everyday lives of indigenous people. Most official Spanish sources, for example the reports from inspections made by archbishops used in Chapter Two, provide few insights into indigenous everyday life. It is true that litigation in Spanish, the source for Chapter Three, has revealed certain aspects of marital relations. However, Spanish sources provide quite a distinct perspective on the structure of local everyday life from that found in the Nahuatl testaments (Chapter Four), which have proved to be the most fruitful source in throwing light on Nahua private life. The different nature of the sources makes an approach based on both types of documents at the same time highly stimulating and challenging.

Up until now the chapters have each been based primarily on one particular kind of source, all Spanish or all Nahuatl. It was hard to locate Spanish material of sufficient specificity to be useful in analysis of the household and the land complex connected with it. When we come to certain matters affecting the world beyond the household, however, things are different. In the areas of traditional healing practices and of indigenous economic activity in the broader society, we find Spanish material mentioning specific people, times, places, and practices of a kind that goes beyond the typical matter of testaments but can be readily intermeshed with it. One limitation still attaches to Spanish sources even of this kind; they cannot normally reveal the relevant conceptual vocabulary of the indigenous people as material in Nahuatl can.¹ However, when one is investigating colonial society as a whole, Spanish concepts are an important part of the mix, and Spanish sources are crucial. In the present context, material in Spanish can add to the picture meaningfully, and it is important to see the

¹ Sometimes originally Nahuatl words can be found as loanwords within Spanish texts, conveying indigenous concepts in unchanged form, as happens in the section on healing with words for spirits and herbs.

extent to which the two types of sources provide evidence that is compatible. It is also necessary to be aware that despite the large gap between the two kinds of sources, which has left its mark on the structure and content of this work, the procedures that I have employed to analyse the materials are not antagonistic to the integration of Nahuatl and Spanish material, of which I here present a modest beginning. It is a relatively new approach, for scholars have tended to use documents either in Spanish or in Nahuatl, without combining the two.

The chapter is dedicated to activities and aspects of women's everyday life that often begin within the framework of the household but open it up, revealing its relationship with the external world whether for religious or economic purposes. The material here is therefore closely linked to Chapter Four, since an understanding of the indigenous private sphere is essential to analyse how this realm was related to a more public sphere. Indeed, a full understanding of the matter of Chapters Four and Five may lead one to the conclusion, reached previously by other scholars studying the Nahuas, that in their world no thorough-going distinction between private and public spheres existed.² Religious practices and rites pushed women towards contacts with the local church and the community, often stimulating a reaction involving the simultaneous assimilation of new beliefs and preservation of ancient patterns. These and other issues are to be analysed in the first part through a discussion of rituals related to death and healing practices classified as idolatrous by colonial authorities. A special phenomenon in this field is the cult of Catholic saints, to which a section is devoted. The religious practices presented in Part I are based mainly on the analysis of the corpus of testaments already mentioned in Chapter Four (30 for women and 38 for men), together with some litigation in Spanish for healing rituals. Another way for the private space to open up is through the economic activities that indigenous women were involved in, of which the cultivation of maguey and production of alcoholic beverages was among the most popular, as the second part of the chapter will make clear. In this case, both Nahuatl testaments and litigation in Spanish are used.

² Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 160-2, 229-35; Kellogg, *Law*, pp. 94-103, and "Hegemony out of Conquest: The First Two Centuries of Spanish Rule in Central Mexico", *Radical History Review* 53 (1992), pp. 36-7.

PART I: RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

One way women took part in the world beyond the home was through participation in practices of a religious nature, practices that permitted a rapprochement between indigenous women and the Church, often giving the parish a central role, at least from the point of view of formulas and ceremonies. Some of these practices have no clear connection with the household, including the various rites associated with dying, which figure prominently in testaments and form the focus of the first part of this section. Others involve the household as well as the world at large, as with the cult of the saints, to which the second section of Part I is devoted, and healing practices that were classified as idolatrous or unorthodox by colonial authorities, discussed in the last section. All these aspects of religious practice involved women's participation beyond the supposedly usual sphere of the household, since funerals, the worship of saints, and healing, took place in front of the community's eyes, and all had a public dimension.

Religious practices linked to the Christian faith, spread among the indigenous population first by the mendicant friars, then by the secular clergy, penetrated the indigenous world at an early stage, as the Testaments of Culhuacan have already shown.³ The eighteenth century demonstrates continuity, but at the same time the analysis of subtleties contained in the testaments and their vocabulary permits the discovery of some aspects of religious practices that are typical of the area and of the period of study. It also reveals some differences between the way that women and men were involved in them.

³ Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*.

Rites of Death

Testaments, both in their openings and in the first part of the main corpus of the document itself, are valuable sources on Nahuatl society's rites related to death. At first the preambles and the formulas contained in them are examined, and then details about the mass and funeral practices more properly speaking are analysed, considering burial, the shroud and offerings.

Preambles

Nahuatl testaments usually begin with a formulaic preamble through which the testator asserts her/his belief in the Christian faith and adherence to the Church. However, these statements should not be taken as full and active acceptance of the religion, since the Christian doctrinal material in the preambles tended to be standard, and was primarily the responsibility of the notary. The details that come up in the body of the will are more personal. Nevertheless, an analysis of the formulas allows one to reach some first general conclusions as to the similarities to Spanish practice and on the continuity from early colonial patterns, providing the context for a discussion of eighteenth-century documents.

Generally preambles seem to have been drawn originally from a body of introductory formulas in Spanish testaments, as may be expected, since indigenous society did not have any written bequests before the conquest.⁴ Actually, Nahuatl testaments in the present corpus usually open with a more basic formula, that makes a simple mention of

⁴ The will of Isabel Gómez Plata may be used as an example: "En el nombre de Dios Todopoderoso y de los bienaventurados S. Pedro y S. Pablo, y de todos los Santos, amen. Digo yo Isabel Gómez que estando enferma con peligro de muerte y estando con mi entero juicio hago esta memoria de mis bienes, y protesto decir verdad en todo, como también digo que creo firmemente en el misterio de la Santísima Trinidad, en el misterio de la encarnación del verbo, y demás misterios de fe y todo lo que Nuestra Santa Madre Iglesia cree y confiesa. / In the name of omnipotent God and the blessed San Pedro and San Pablo and all the saints, amen. I Isabel Gómez say that, being sick and in danger of death and being in my entire judgement, I make this memorandum of my goods, and I affirm that I am telling the truth in everything. I also say that I believe firmly in the mystery of the most holy Trinity, in the mystery of the incarnation of the Word, the other mysteries of the faith, and all that our holy mother Church believes and confesses." AHAM, Box 1734, "José Gómez Plata informa que el testamento de su hermana está en depósito de Francisca Rosales".

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, generally followed by praise of the Trinity, as the example of the will of Isabel María shows:

"Ma mosenquiczayectenehua ytlāomahuiztocatzin Dios tetatzin yhuan Dios ytlāopilzin yhuan Dios Espiritu Santo ma yuh mochiua Amen Jesus Maria y Josephe — Axcan sabado yeic tonatiuh Mani Meztli de Nobiembre yhuan Xiuitlapohualli de 1731 años Nicpehualtia notestamento Nehuatl Notoca ySavel Maria nibiuda yca Marco francisco Notlaxilacalpan Santa clara Cozcatlan Niquitoa ca hel ninococohua yntla nechmonochilis notlazotatzin Dios ca hel ySemactzinco nicontlalia noyolian nanimantzin yn notlazotatzin Dios

May the precious revered name of God the Father, God his beloved Child, and God the Holy Ghost be entirely praised; may it be so done, amen. Jesus, Mary and Joseph. — Today, Saturday the 3rd of November of the year of 1731, I begin my testament, I named Isabel María, widow of Marcos Francisco; my district is in Santa Clara Cozcatlan. I say that I am very ill; if my beloved Father God calls me, I place my spirit and my soul entirely in the hands of my beloved Father God."⁵

Sometimes the opening formula may be slightly more complex, this being more common in earlier times, as seen in the Testaments of Culhuacan.⁶ Some standard elements of the Toluca formula, however, including the invocation to Jesus, Mary and Joseph and the formula 'ma in mochihua amen / may it be done, amen', appear to have been developed at some point after the early colonial period, since they were not present in Stage 2 documents. This feature is very similar in women's and men's wills; in fact, as standard items, opening formulas tend to be almost the same for the two genders. Nevertheless, in the present corpus of Nahuatl wills, more examples of variation and originality appear in the preambles of some male testators. In view of the importance of the notaries in formulating documents, these subtleties do not necessarily mean that men had closer contact with the Church or were more influenced

⁵ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731. Some variation is possible, such as the explicit reference to the Trinity: "yeyntintzintzi personas auh ca san se huel neli teotl dios / three persons but only one very true divinity God" (AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ana María", 1716); or the verb 'machiotia' for 'to take as a sign': 'I take as my sign the name of God the father, God the child, and God the Holy Spirit (AHAM, Box 1736-37, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737); or again they may say 'nicnoneltoquitia', 'I believe in'.

⁶ See documents in Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, particularly Docs. 5 and 21, for simple preambles, and Docs. 9, 14, and 17, for examples of elaborated preambles.

by it. Such passages tend to give the impression that notaries put more originality and maybe paid greater attention in writing men's wills. If so, it may be the same phenomenon as men generally having more impressive and varied names, as indicated in Chapter Four, or it may relate to those who held official positions that could only be occupied by men.

After the doctrinal formula proper, another clause is often found, in which the testator refers to her/his soul, to be entrusted to God, and to the body, to be given back to the earth where it originated. It is worthy of note that both indigenous women and men normally used the Spanish-derived term *ánima*, 'soul', showing the continuation of a Christian concept that had already gained currency in the sixteenth century.⁷ Yet, they usually combined this term with the Nahuatl *-yolia*, or 'spirit', a word that had fallen out of use in many places but still appears in the corpus of testaments from Toluca. This feature is interesting in showing that although the Spanish-Christian concept of soul had been adopted from an early stage despite being extraneous to indigenous tradition, at the same time it had been combined with a traditional element, to form a coupled term, *-yolia -animatzin*, a practice that was common in the indigenous language, and the pair became a definitive part of local usage.⁸ Once again, it is a pattern that can be seen equally among female and male testators.

As for the body, specific Nahuatl terms are employed to define it, and words derived from Spanish are never found. Even so, Spanish influence may be involved. In pre-Spanish times, Nahuatl seems not to have put much emphasis on any word for the body as opposed to the entire person. In the Culhuacan Testaments the nearly universal word used for corpse is *-nacayo*, literally 'one's own flesh'. Less common but present in the sixteenth century is the expression *-tlalnacayo*, 'one's earthly flesh', in effect 'earthly body', which follows Spanish religious concepts. That term is found in the Toluca corpus occasionally, but the concept is expressed mainly through a typical

⁷ See Cline and León-Portilla, *Testaments of Culhuacan*, for example Docs. 29 and 30, however the term is used practically in all wills.

⁸ An example can be found in AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707.

indigenous pair of terms, *-tlallo -çoquio*, 'one's earth', one's clay'.⁹ The idiom seems to have originated or at least become popular later than the sixteenth century; it is not present in the Culhuacan Testaments. This vocabulary was similarly used in both women's and men's testaments in the Toluca corpus.

Finally, preambles may include an invocation to the Virgin Mary, which generally took the form of something like the following: 'I also implore our intercessor the lady Santa María to pray to her precious revered only child our lord Jesus Christ on my behalf'. What we see here is the importance of the popular image of the Virgin as intercessor with God to defend the sinner.¹⁰ The Virgin Mary was also referred to in some of her numerous manifestations (Virgin of Guadalupe, Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, etc.), with a shorter formula expressing faith in her or praising her. Formulas of this kind are similarly present in women's and men's testaments, with a slight predominance of the full formula for female testators. Although eleven cases of this kind of formula have been found in women's testaments, and eleven in men's testaments, the fact that in the present corpus men's wills are more numerous than women's, means that mentioning the Virgin seems to have been more common among women.¹¹

Mass and Funeral Practices

After the religious preamble of a testament and before the actual bequests to relatives comes a section about masses and funeral ceremonies. Here we find many more

⁹ AHAM, Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757.

¹⁰ The vision of the Virgin as intercessor was already present in testaments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as can be proved through some examples in Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart, *Beyond the Codices*, particularly Doc. 1, don Julián de la Rosa: 'I am also devoted to my intercessor his precious mother lady Saint Mary'; or Doc. 4, don Juan de Guzmán: 'for I greatly implore the precious lady St. Mary, eternal virgin, to speak on my behalf before her precious child our lord Jesus Christ'. Another example is the will of Bárbara Agustina, in Lockhart, *Things*: 'In the name of (the trinity) and also the eternal virgin Saint Mary our intercessor to speak on my behalf'. However, emphasis on the Virgin as intercessor may have increased with time; no trace of the concept is found in the Testaments of Culhuacan.

¹¹ Examples from the corpus: AGNT 2543, exp. 6, Testament of Paulina María, 1756; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Antonia María, 1753; AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753;

personal details on testators and information on Christian funeral practices. In a general sense, what appears evident is the great change that took place compared to precolonial times. Ancient Nahuas had very different funeral practices: the elders gave a speech to the deceased's family to comfort them, then they took away the corpse to be shrouded with its clothes, and finally burnt it together with a dog, who was to help the deceased in her/his journey to the land of the dead. The ashes were buried in the house, where the family put offerings to accompany the deceased.¹² After the conquest, the Nahuas adopted the rites of death introduced by the Church, as will be explained in this and in the following subsections through the analysis of testaments. First of all, in women's wills, what appears evident at a first glance is that a mass is almost always required by the testator as a help for her soul; only four women out of 30 fail to mention it at all, but since they give other dispositions about their funerals, it may be that the celebration of a mass was so obvious that specifying it was deemed unnecessary.¹³

Nahuatl did not seem to have a term equivalent to 'mass', so from their first inception Nahuatl testaments used the Spanish-derived *misa*. In the Toluca corpus, the reference is usually completed by *rezada* or *cantada*, for low or high mass respectively (literally recited or sung). Fourteen women left no details about the kind of mass they wanted to be performed, while ten others asked for a high mass, and there seems to be no distinction of social status, since they included both distinguished women and commoners. Moreover, in one case the testator, Mauricia Josefa, asked for a low mass, but at the back of the will it is reported that a mass was sung.¹⁴ And in another case, the female testator did not make any explicit reference, but since the fees were high and a vigil was included, it seems likely that a high mass was to be celebrated.¹⁵ Apart from the curious case of Mauricia Josefa, only two women out of 26 who mentioned a

AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693.

¹² Sahagún, *Historia general*, vol. 1, pp. 295-8.

¹³ AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707; AGNT 2541, exp. 21, Testament of Juana María, 1746; AGNT 2530, exp. 6, Testament of doña Agustina Francisca, 1737; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of María Micaela, 1762.

¹⁴ AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Mauricia Josefa", 1732.

¹⁵ AGNT 2298, exp. 3, Testament of Petrona Magdalena, 1732.

mass in their will requested a low mass, one of them being a distinguished woman, the other was María de Guadalupe, who issued a testament on behalf of her deceased nephew.¹⁶

In most cases female testators did not specify who was to be charged with paying for the mass and seeing that it was performed, so presumably it was one of the tasks of the executor. However, some women left precise instructions, normally entrusting a close member of the family. Lucía María and Josefa Angelina had their daughters pay for the mass, while Nicolasa Albarrán entrusted it to her son, and Pascuala Melchora to her three children.¹⁷ Also the husband was put in charge in two cases, while reference to collateral relatives such as nephews or aunts is seen only when no closer relatives are present.¹⁸ Finally María de la Encarnación puts her *cofradía* in charge of everything, but this seems to happen only when no other option is available, and in fact she is a lone widow; she only mentions a granddaughter who may help, but the relationship does not appear to be strong.¹⁹ Some women also referred to the priest as the person who was to help them with the mass, in the sense of performing it.

As for male testators, of a total of 38 testaments, in 28 cases they leave instructions for a mass to be said for their soul, very often together with a responsory prayer, but only in a few cases are any details given about the kind of celebration they wish to be carried out. While nine men ask for a high mass to be performed, only Josef Matías states that he wants a low mass to accompany his soul.²⁰ In addition, don Nicolás de Tolentino says that a mass is to be performed for him in the presence of his body, the only time we find such a reference even though the '*misa de cuerpo presente*' was a

¹⁶ AHAM, Box 1736-7, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737, and Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757.

¹⁷ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Lucía María, 1728; AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766; AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Testament of Nicolasa Albarrán, 1737; AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717.

¹⁸ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Ignacia Cristina, 1759; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Dominga María, 1759; AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738; Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757.

¹⁹ AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de María de la Encarnación", 1733.

²⁰ AGNCi 664, exp. 3, Testament of Josef Matías, 1759.

standard type of ceremony.²¹ A special case is represented by don Juan de la Cruz:²² as a distinguished man, he asks for three masses with responsory to be performed. Thus in most of the cases there is only a general statement about a mass to be performed, which is quite different to female testators, who seem to show more concern with rites and the Church, even if the difference is not huge.²³

As for the person who is responsible for making sure that a mass is performed, in fourteen testaments nothing is said, so that it can be assumed that it was the responsibility of the executor. Usually, children are put in charge, both males and females, while Bartolomé Elías entrusted it to his grandchildren, probably because no other heir was available.²⁴ In addition, Sebastián de Santiago referred to both his daughter and a grown-up grandson, presumably the daughter's son, saying that they were to share the expenses.²⁵ A particular case is the one of Mateo Serrano, who left his nephew to arrange the mass even though he had three children, perhaps because the nephew was a distinguished person (a *don*) and so could provide a high-class ceremony.²⁶ The same suspicion obtains in the case of Marcos de la Cruz, since he entrusted the mass and burial to his *comadre*, a Spanish woman, when his wife was still alive.²⁷ The wife is usually given the responsibility when children are too young or when there are no children, as in the case of don Nicolás de Tolentino and Agustín Pedro.²⁸ However, when another adult member of the family was available as an alternative to the wife, he could be called on to provide for the mass, as in the case of don Diego Lorenzo, who entrusted it to a brother.²⁹ Finally, a woman could also be

²¹ AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723.

²² AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

²³ There are eleven female testators who specify the type of mass, against fifteen who do not, and ten male testators who give details against eighteen who do not.

²⁴ AGNT 2547, exp. 2, Testament of Bartolomé Elías, 1746.

²⁵ AHAM, Box 1731, "Testamento de Sebastián de Santiago", 1731.

²⁶ AGNT 5, exp. 21, Testament of Mateo Serrano, 1703.

²⁷ AGNT 2542, exp. 6, Testament of Marcos de la Cruz, 1753.

²⁸ AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723; AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Agustín Pedro" 1732.

²⁹ AHAM, Box 1718, "Testamento de don Diego Lorenzo", 1719.

entrusted with the mass as a mother, as in the case of Juan de los Santos.³⁰ Therefore male testators seem to follow patterns similar to those seen for female testators.

In only a few cases, a note is written in Spanish on the back of the testament to record that a mass had been performed and paid for. However, these instances suffice to establish that the celebration and the related payment normally took place at least a few months after the testator's death.³¹ In only a few cases was the person responsible unusually prompt in having the mass paid for within a few days.³² In one case the testator left her dispositions in 1732 but the mass was not paid for and performed until five years later, in 1737, while in another case a note on the testament informs us that the mass had not been celebrated.³³ Although the evidence is scanty, it seems that the dead testator usually had to wait a while before her/his soul could be accompanied by the mass she/he had requested; this may help to explain why there are only very few cases of the 'misa de cuerpo presente'.

In addition to what testators mentioned in their wills, some other practices that were normally related to funeral rituals were probably so common that testators did not need to specify them, being sure that they would be provided by their families. For instance, it was important to provide food for the people who took part in the ceremony; we might expect that meat, chiles and salt, together with tortillas, were served, all accompanied by the indispensable pulque. Moreover, when a mass for the deceased's soul was celebrated, not only was an offering of money given to the church, but also some sort of gift such as a chicken went to the priest or sacristan.³⁴

³⁰ AHAM, Box 1756, "Testamento de Juan de los Santos", 1756.

³¹ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ana María", 1716; Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733; Box 1733, "Testamento de Adrián Josef", 1733.

³² AHAM, Box 1731, "Testamento de Luis Francisco", 1731; Box 1728-9, "Testamento de Salvador Cayetano", 1728; Box 1702-4, "Testamento - Pascual de los Reyes", 1703.

³³ AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Mauricia Josefa", 1732; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Ignacia Cristina, 1759.

³⁴ Details have been extracted from AGNT 2523, exp. 5, Memorandum of the funeral of Mateo Serrano, 1703.

Burial

The place of burial would be an obvious thing to be considered and mentioned very often in testaments. Actually, in thirteen cases female testators make no reference to it at all, thirteen being almost half of the group of 30 women's wills I have selected. Moreover, in three other cases testators only refer to burial in the general sense, without providing any detail; as a consequence the number of wills in which specific dispositions are given on burial is less than half of the total. However, these cases prove to be extremely interesting in revealing some aspects of women's life.

Generally, all women who said something about burial stated that they wanted to be buried inside the church; in a few cases there is no further specification, while in thirteen cases some more details are given. The testator may say that she wants to be buried in front of or by the image of the Virgin Mary, or Jesus, or a saint, meaning where their altar or image is located inside the church; this happens nine times.³⁵ The case of María Micaela is particularly interesting in that she asks to be buried facing the altar of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, where her mother had already been buried. It is clearly a family tradition preserved from mother to daughter, and this leads us to two other cases in which the testators mention a chapel or door of the Third Order of San Francisco. The two women in question belong to the same family, one being the by now familiar Elena de la Cruz and the other her daughter María Hernández, so again we have a case of a daughter following her mother's precedent (see Appendix). The practice of requesting burial next to a close member of the family may involve relationships other than that between mother and daughter; in fact Polonia María asks

³⁵ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737; Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1736-7, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737; Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738; Box 1757(2), "Testamento - María de Guadalupe", 1757; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of María Micaela, 1762; AGNT 2541, exp. 21, Testament of Juana María, 1746; AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717.

to be buried inside the church at the same site where her husband had been placed.³⁶ It is only one case, but it is worthy of note.

Referring to the place of burial seems to be more common in men's testaments, in fact 28 cases can be identified out of the total of 38. Of them, in five cases the burial is indicated just as accompanying the mass, and no further details are given. In a few other cases the testator only mentions that he wants to be buried inside the church, sometimes also indicating its name, as with Antonio de Santiago, who refers to the church of San Lucas Evangelista.³⁷ What is surprising is that compared to women's wills in all other cases men point to a specific place to be buried, usually at a sacred image, an altar, or a chapel, either inside the church or, less frequently, in the churchyard. In some cases a special bond with the place of one's father's grave becomes evident, as in Luis Francisco's testament; he wants to be buried inside the church where his late father lies, and it is noteworthy that also his mother Isabel María, in her will issued in the same year, requests burial near her husband's grave; the detail shows a sort of tradition and perhaps also the status of the family.³⁸ A similar case is that of Juan Crisóstomo, who requests burial in the chapel of Rosario, where both his father and his mother are buried; here it is of some relevance that the testator mentions his mother as well as his father.³⁹ A last and very interesting case is represented by the testaments of Ambrosio Lorenzo, the father, and Gregorio Juan, his son; both of them give instructions to be buried under a copal tree, in the direction of Toluca, and no mention is made of religious points of reference such as churches, chapels or images.⁴⁰ Thus it seems that while some female testators felt a special bond with their mothers' grave, some men wished to be buried near their fathers.

³⁶ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710.

³⁷ AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de Antonio de Santiago", 1726.

³⁸ AHAM, Box 1731, "Testamento de Luis Francisco", 1731, and Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731.

³⁹ AHAM, Box 1700-1, "Testamento de Juan Crisóstomo", 1701.

⁴⁰ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1715, and Box 1731, "Testamento de Gregorio Juan", 1731.

A final detail of interest is that the term usually found in testaments for 'grave' is the Spanish-derived *sepultura*; no Nahuatl equivalent appears.⁴¹

Shroud

Following the Spanish practice, a corpse was normally buried wrapped in a shroud, or *mortaja*. One can speculate that the shroud was taken for granted in many cases, as it is in many wills of earlier times. However, the fact that in those testaments where no property is left there is also no mention is made of wrapping the body supports the impression that when a shroud was used, it was mentioned, and that it therefore depended on the resources of the testator to invest in it. Only eleven women requested a shroud in their testaments, or declared they had one; as a consequence it is possible that the practice was not so widespread among indigenous women. Women might indicate that they had something for the shroud but give no further details. María de la Encarnación only says that it is to be provided by the *cofradía*⁴², while others might specify that it was to be accompanied by the rope of San Francisco⁴³; or again that the shroud proper was to be the habit of San Francisco, as in the case of the *principal*a María Micaela.⁴⁴ The habit and rope of San Francisco had long been extremely popular among the indigenous people of Mexico across a broad area, and many of the churches in the Toluca Valley had been manned by Franciscans from the beginning. However, the examples found in the corpus of women requesting the Franciscan habit as a shroud are not as many as one would expect. Instead, women often request other habits.

⁴¹ The term *sepultura* is not found in the Testaments of Culhuacan, but no alternative indigenous word was used either. However, use of the Spanish term is not new; for example, Bárbara Agustina's testament in Lockhart, *Things*, of 1608 (p. 268), has *sepultura* (*nosepoltora*).

⁴² AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de María de la Encarnación", 1733.

⁴³ AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707, and Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711.

⁴⁴ AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of María Micaela, 1762.

One woman, María Josefa, wishes to have the habit of Nuestra Señora de la Merced (see Appendix).⁴⁵ But far the most popular was the habit of the Virgin of Carmen. Among the eleven cases, six women indicate that they wished to have the habit of the Virgin of Carmen as their shroud; in all but one case the habit is to be accompanied by the rope of San Francisco.⁴⁶ Some of these women have property and occupy a distinguished position in society, but others do not, so that wealth and status do not seem to be the justification for the choice of the Virgin of Carmen. Curiously, some women of this group (Pascuala Melchora, Isabel María, Tomasa Gertrudis) come from the same community, as references to the neighbouring *tlaxilacalli* in their testaments show: San Juan Bautista, Santa María de los Angeles Huitzillan, San Sebastián, San Diego (Santa Clara Cozcatlan is also mentioned as bordering the previous ones).⁴⁷ As a consequence, I tend to think that, within the general framework that a shroud demonstrates the existence of resources to pay for it, the habit of the Virgin of Carmen is a local tradition rather than a mark of status. While the whole Valley was characterised by the presence of the Franciscans, the Carmelites had a convent in Toluca from the end of the seventeenth century, so it may be that the use of the habit of the Virgin of Carmen as a shroud was derived from their influence.⁴⁸

These conclusions are further supported by the details that appear in men's testaments. Only four of them out of 38 mention the habit of the Virgin of Carmen and it is not a coincidence that three are from the pueblo of San Juan Bautista, while one is from Santa María de los Angeles; moreover, the other *tlaxilacalli* above mentioned are also referred to in their wills.⁴⁹ The cult of the Virgin of Carmen was therefore important

⁴⁵ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

⁴⁶ AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710; and AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737; Box 1750, "Testamento de Vicenta Teresa", 1737; Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738.

⁴⁷ As for the other women, María Hernández is from San Miguel Aticpac, Vicenta Teresa from San Francisco Calixtlahuaca, and Polonia María from San Pablo Tepemaxalco.

⁴⁸ The monastery of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción was founded in Toluca in 1698; see Pedro Borges, *Religiosos en Hispanoamerica* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992), p. 203.

⁴⁹ AHAM, Box 1731, "Testamento de Sebastián de Santiago", 1731; Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737; Box 1741-2, "Testamento de Felipe de Santiago", 1741; Box 1756, "Testamento de Juan de los Santos", 1756.

for that particular area, perhaps much so that in some cases, such as Sebastián de Santiago, the name of the Virgin was transmitted within the family, his grandson being called Juan del Carmen. These men also mention the habit together with the omnipresent rope of San Francisco, while one of them refers to the rope of San Diego, the only mention of this kind in the whole corpus.⁵⁰ Thus it is reasonable to think that the use of the habit of Carmen is a local tradition, if not of the Toluca Valley in general then of the specific area of those *tlaxilacalli* in particular. It can also be said that the use of this habit as a shroud is more common for women than for men. Moreover, all the women of the group left some specific dispositions for their funeral and burial, which seems to suggest that some resources were available to allow for the provision of the shroud as well. As for the men, funeral and burial details were present, but one man had only moderate property compared to the general standard, while another left no property at all.

To complete the comparison with men's testaments with respect to the shroud, it must be said that the cases in which a shroud is mentioned are eighteen, somewhat more than with women, as might be expected due to the larger number of men's wills. Of the total, seven men only refer to a shroud in general, together with the rope of San Francisco, while five others mention the habit of San Francisco and its rope (apart from one who mentions only the habit), and the last two declare only that a shroud should be provided. As a consequence, it can be concluded that the use of the Franciscan habit as a shroud was much more popular among men than among women, while the rope was universal. Since some very distinguished women and men said nothing about a specific shroud, it would seem that, although having one was a sign of status, the particular kind depended on local tradition rather than wealth.

Some mention should also be made of the terminology used. Words of Spanish origin such as *hábito* and *mortaja* were quite common, with a predominance of the former word in women's testaments, while the latter is found exclusively in men's wills. Both

⁵⁰ AHAM, Box 1741, "Testamento de Felipe de Santiago", 1741. It apparently reflects the fact that the discalced friars of San Diego were an offshoot of the Franciscans, so that their presence in the Valley was related to the latter.

genders also used the Nahuatl term *-tlaquentzin*, from *tlaquemitl* (or *tlaquentli*) in the meaning of 'habit' (its basic meaning was simply 'garment'), or an expression such as 'oncatqui ynic quimiliuhtiaz y notlalnacayo / there is something (or I have something) in which my corpse is to be wrapped'. In fact, Nahuatl expressions seem to be more common than Spanish terms, showing the extent to which the indigenous testators had naturalised Christian funeral practices, using native vocabulary to describe them. A Spanish term that did not find any native Nahuatl equivalent is *cordón*, 'rope', seen in the reverential possessed form *-cordontzin*. On one occasion the habit of the Virgin of Carmen to be used as a shroud is specified as being made of *sayal*, or serge, recalling the typical habit of the friars. Here again the Franciscan influence is evident; they were still a predominant presence in the Valley in the early eighteenth century.

Offerings

The section of a will dealing with masses and burial often mentions some offerings by the testator beyond fees for services, of which a contribution to a general church fund known as Jerusalem is the most common. The reason it appeared in testaments was that some contribution to the fund was theoretically a formality required to make them legal; as a consequence testators gave as little as possible, most often half a real, or a real at most. We see here one of the clearest examples of governmental or ecclesiastical influence on the testaments of this time, for the Jerusalem fund is generally not mentioned in Nahuatl testaments of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century (Stage 2).⁵¹ However, in our present corpus mention of the Jerusalem fund abounds; the offering appears in twelve women's wills and in seventeen men's wills, the difference corresponding to the balance of women and men in the corpus. It is curious to discover that both genders were prone to give more than the absolute minimum, not half a real but a full real to the fund, these cases representing a good number of the total (five for women, six for men). Most of the contributors to the Jerusalem fund proved to have some possessions, so it is probable that the contribution

⁵¹ No mention in the Testaments of Culhuacan, none in Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart, *Beyond the Codices* Docs. 1 through 5, 1566 through 1695, but there is one in Doc. 6, which is from the Valley of Toluca, 1795.

was generally a sign of a certain status, and the ability to provide a full real rather than a half might emphasise that aspect. However, it also happened that people such as Ignacia Cristina, who did not bequeath any property at all, left something for the fund, a real in this case, so perhaps at least some testators, or the notaries doing the wills, considered such a clause necessary.⁵²

More heart-felt than the Jerusalem payments were the offerings that testators left to *cofradías*, saints, and churches, whether to support them in carrying out their rites or simply as an expression of appreciation. Such offerings are not common in women's testaments; in fact, there are only three cases out of 30.⁵³ Some money or *magueyes* were left to *cofradías*, such as those of Santísimo Sacramento (most holy Sacrament) or the Souls; the case of Elena de la Cruz is striking, for she leaves an impressive amount of ornaments, vestments, money and *magueyes* to some *cofradías* (see Appendix).⁵⁴ Offerings of this kind are found in addition to the obligatory provisions for masses and burial, so that they can be considered a sign of wealth, showing that the testator had money for them in addition to what was needed to pay for the minimum (Elena de la Cruz, María Ana de Morales, Isabel María were women of a certain position and with property).

As for men, six out of 38 left some dispositions about offerings to *cofradías*, so it seems to be somewhat more common among them; in addition, they tended to leave more money or *magueyes*, and to many more *cofradías*.⁵⁵ The *cofradía* of the Hospital was quite popular, and totally absent from women's testaments, but those of the Sacrament, the Blood of Christ, and the Souls were also mentioned. Juan Crisóstomo is the most extravagant in this matter, since he leaves *magueyes* to no less than six

⁵² AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Ignacia Cristina, 1759.

⁵³ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707; Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731.

⁵⁴ Some of her donations are directly to entities recognisable as *cofradías*; others appear to be in the first instance to saints, but it is likely that all or nearly all of the saints were associated with a *cofradía*.

⁵⁵ AHAM, Box 1700-1, "Testamento de Juan Crisóstomo", 1701; Box 1710-2, "Testamento de Pascual Francisco", 1710; Box 1728, "Testamento de don Felipe de Santiago", 1728; Box 1728-9, "Testamento de Salvador Cayetano", 1728; Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733; AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

cofradías.⁵⁶ With men too, these offerings are proof of a certain status, even though such a rich and distinguished person as don Juan de la Cruz leaves much less than the other testators.⁵⁷

Finally, the testator often made an offering to the church of her/his district as well as to the ones of bordering *tlaxilacalli* for the bells to be rung at her/his death. This was the case in nine women's testaments, with instructions that the bells were to be rung in from one to three, four, or even five *tlaxilacalli*, depending apparently on the money available for the purpose. Once again, funeral practices marked differences in status and wealth, since all the women who requested bell ringing were of a relatively high status. The same number of cases is found in men's testaments,⁵⁸ and taking into account that men are more numerous in the corpus, it can be concluded that this practice may have been more widespread among indigenous women. The ringing of bells seemed to be mentioned more in the Toluca region than in many other places; however, the number of cases is not striking when viewed in the context of the whole corpus.⁵⁹

As for the terms used, the predominant word for bell is the Nahuatl *tepoztlī*, literally 'metal, object or tool of metal', or *miccatepoztlī* (adding 'dead person' to *tepoztlī*), while the Spanish *campana* is found only in four cases. Again, a Spanish tradition was rendered through the use of the indigenous language. Both the Nahuatl expression and the Spanish loanword go back to the sixteenth century and had been faithfully preserved in the Toluca tradition, without the Spanish-derived term gaining any ground.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ AHAM, Box 1700-1, "Testamento de Juan Crisóstomo", 1701. Cultivation of magueyes will receive close attention in Part II of the chapter.

⁵⁷ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691.

⁵⁸ No mention in the Testaments of Culhuacan, while from Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart, *Beyond the Codices* and Lockhart, *Things*, we know that the ringing of bells was normal in Coyoacan. All the cases here discussed come from the AHAM, not the AGN, so probably it was a local practice.

⁵⁹ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, p. 221, shows both *campana* and *miccatepoztlī* already in use in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Concluding Thoughts on Funeral Rites

The details about death rites that have been collected through the testaments show the penetration of Spanish influence, which is most visible in preambles and invocations, although they tend to be quite frozen and impersonal forms compared to funeral practices. Here the penetration of Spanish practices can be seen in terms of the general adoption of Christian rituals for funeral and burial; moreover, the influence of both church and government is perceived through some details such as the mention of the fund for Jerusalem, a Spanish practice not characteristic of sixteenth-century Nahuatl wills that was adopted in the Toluca Valley at least from the mid-seventeenth century. The differences in rites and offerings give some idea of the structuring of the indigenous society in different levels of status and wealth, even if in the Valley of Toluca the gaps are not huge.

Ritual practices related to death are very similar for women and men. Both genders almost universally requested a mass and burial at the Christian church and, according to economic means, made offerings to help their souls. Differences appear more in the details than in the level of assimilation of Christian practices. For instance, while women seemed to give greater importance to dispositions over the mass and to bells to be rung, men gave more details about their burial and shroud, and left more varied and substantial offerings to *cofradías*, as if they had more money at their disposal. Similarly there was a tendency for men to be shrouded in the Franciscan habit, women in that of the Virgin of Carmen, which is suggestive of parallel but different traditions for women and men, despite the fact that some men used the habit of the Virgin of Carmen and at least one woman the Franciscan. Moreover, some differences seem to run parallel to those we have noticed in the previous chapter, with more elaboration of formula and rites in the case of men, especially prominent men.

The fact that Christian funeral practices figure prominently in most wills is evidence of the penetration of Church influence at this level; it is not a new phenomenon, but rather a continuation from the sixteenth century. Indigenous populations had started the process of assimilation of Christian practices shortly after the conquest, but rather

than copying the Spanish models, they reformulated them. This originality and elaboration can be seen in the testaments from the Toluca Valley through the terminology that was adopted. Many Christian concepts did not have an equivalent in Nahuatl, so some Spanish terms were used, but whenever it was possible, a Nahuatl version of the concept was provided and often used more extensively than the Spanish term itself. This process of reformulation is further visible in the adoption of the cult of Christian saints, as the following section will show.

Saints

The cult of saints figures prominently in the corpus of testaments selected for the research. The same would not have been true for sixteenth-century Nahuatl testaments, where saints are virtually unmentioned as far as their cult is concerned. According to the research done by Stephanie Wood and James Lockhart, it would appear that the devotion of saints came to maturity in the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ In this section first the patterns in bequeathing saints are studied, followed by a consideration of other practices associated with their cult.

Bequeathing Saints

Sixteen, or half of the women in our corpus of Nahuatl testaments bequeathed some saints; the proportion is quite impressive, even though it is less than in men's wills, as we shall see shortly. It might be expected that testators would refer to images of saints; however, the term 'image' is hardly found, and normally they just speak of saints. In some cases the reference to the saints concerned is general, with a simple declaration that the saints are to be taken care of; sometimes the declaration is accompanied by an

⁶⁰ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 235-7; Stephanie Wood, "Adopted Saints: Christian Images in Nahua Testaments of Late Colonial Toluca", *The Americas* 47(3) (1991), pp. 289-93.

additional reference to a specific saint.⁶¹ However, in the majority of the cases the saints bequeathed were called by their names.

Generally women mentioned one or two saints, suggesting that the possession of a couple of images, although requiring some resources to pay for them, was quite common. Women in possession of a more numerous collection of saints were extremely rare, in our corpus only Elena de la Cruz, with at least five images, and her holdings were definitely a sign of wealth and status (see Appendix).⁶² Actually, images of saints did not need to be figures in the round carved of wood or stone, or large canvases, but could be just small oil paintings on wood or prints, and people did not need to be wealthy to possess a small painting or a print. It cannot be determined whether indigenous people made their own images or purchased them, but even in the second case they could commission a local artist to produce an image, which was not very expensive.⁶³

Entering into an analysis of the names of saints, a first important consideration is that ten women refer to a manifestation of the Virgin, the most popular being Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe⁶⁴, followed by Nuestra Señora de los Dolores.⁶⁵ It is important to note that by this time the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe had become very common among indigenous people; the fact that many references to the Virgin are found in the

⁶¹ See the following cases: AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737; Box 1736-7, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737; Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; and AGNT 2530, exp. 6, Testament of doña Agustina María, 1737. Some examples of testaments in which specific saints are mentioned: AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Mauricia Josefa", 1732; Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738. It is interesting to note how testators speak of the household saints as a group. In preambles, speaking of the saints in heaven, the norm is the Nahuatl *in santos in santas*, 'the male saints and the female saints', as though they were two entirely different things. But when women talk about the saints in the house, in almost all cases they seem to use the masculine as a collective for both genders, as in Spanish (*santos, satotí*, etc.). María Hernández and Isabel María, however, use *santos y santas*.

⁶² AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711.

⁶³ Wood, "Adopted Saints", pp. 270-1; and "Matters of Life", p. 176.

⁶⁴ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738; AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766; AGNT 2541, exp. 21, Testament of Juana María, 1746; AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Testament of Nicolasa Albarrán, 1737.

⁶⁵ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of María Micaela, 1762.

corpus of testaments proves that she had come to occupy an important place in the indigenous belief world, marking a significant change from earlier times. Only two women refer to any other female saint, Santa Efigenia in one case, and Santa Isabel in the other.⁶⁶ The latter case is particularly interesting because the female testator's name was Isabel María, demonstrating the existence of a link between the person's name and the saint. Moreover, she was quite well off and left the image to her daughter, maybe following a tradition of transmission from female to female in wealthy families. Seven women mention male saints; it is of interest to note that Christ was treated simply as one of the saints in this context, and contrary to what happens with the Virgin Mary, he does not seem to be very common, being mentioned by only two women. San Diego is the most popular, followed by San Nicolás and San Antonio.⁶⁷

As for the family members who received the images as bequests, generally children were the first choice. If there were enough saints, all the children might receive at least one, but this apparent ideal was realised only by Elena de la Cruz; in all other cases only one or two children were chosen. As happened with other kinds of property, daughters seem to have inherited saints mainly when they were the only heirs or when sons were too small.⁶⁸ If a woman had sons, usually they inherited the saints, and only when others were available were any daughters considered as well.⁶⁹ This conclusion is strengthened by the case of María de la Cruz, who leaves a statue of San Diego to her grandson although she also has two daughters, to whom she bequeaths other property.⁷⁰ Thus it seems that when a direct male descendant is present, even if of the

⁶⁶ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710; AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731.

⁶⁷ See the cases in: AHAM, Box 1705-9, "Testamento de María Ana de Morales", 1707; Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; AGNCi 997, exp. 2, Testament of María de la Cruz, 1736; AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710. A reference to the rope of San Diego has already been found in this corpus, which may be some hint of a local devotion.

⁶⁸ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Mauricia Josefa", 1732; Box 1736-7, "Testamento de Melchora María", 1737.

⁶⁹ AGNT 2544, exp. 14, Testament of Josefa Angelina, 1766; AGNT 2541, exp. 21, Testament of Juana María, 1746; AGNT 2530, exp. 6, Testament of doña Agustina Francisca, 1737.

⁷⁰ AGNCi 997, exp. 2, Testament of María de la Cruz, 1736.

second generation, he is more likely to inherit a saint. Nephews were called in only when no other heirs were available, and collaterals usually did not receive saints; in fact, there is only one case in the corpus, that of Polonia María who left two saints to her sister.⁷¹ It seems that no distinction of gender was made in terms of females inheriting female saints; both sons and daughters were entrusted with the worship of male and female saints. Generally it can be seen that the inheritance patterns for saints were very similar to the ones for landed property, maybe because the saints in some sense symbolised and were associated with that property, as will be discussed below.

Sometimes it happened that an image was left to the parish church, so that the worship was a community duty, as in the case of María Hernández, who leaves an image of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores to the church of Carmen (see Appendix).⁷² The most striking case of a saint being bequeathed to a church is that of Pascuala María, an aged widow from Santa María de la Asunción, who inherited an image of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (the *altepetl* saint) through the line of her grandfather and father, don Juan Alonso and don Miguel Alonso.⁷³ She has kept tradition alive by keeping the image, but now she wants to leave it to the *altepetl* authorities to avoid trouble among her children and nephews and nieces. Her grandfather don Juan Alonso had declared in his will that he had served the image of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción in the church but that it was not the property of the *altepetl* because he had bought it; he had entrusted his children with the worship, adding that at their death, grandchildren would have to carry on with the tradition. We are considering here a family with wealth and status, in which both the grandfather and father bore the title 'don' and the second name Alonso. Also, the image was said to be in the *altepetl* church, so probably it was large and expensive. Pascuala María steps into a very important family role, probably for lack of male heirs, but it is interesting to underline that she does it, and especially that she is very active and autonomous. We see something of her role in the fact that she manages

⁷¹ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738, AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of María Micaela, 1762; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710.

⁷² AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Hernández", 1737.

⁷³ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala María, 1762; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692.

affairs and other people's inheritance as well, giving instructions about the property of her deceased sister and aunt.

Male testators, who as we have seen are more numerous in the present corpus, mention saints in 24 cases, more than half of men's wills and relatively more than female testators. Moreover, men seem to give more details about the saints, and in various cases many saints are mentioned, rather than the one or two as in the women's testaments.⁷⁴ As for the saints that were bequeathed or received some offering for their worship, one immediately notices one difference from the saints bequeathed by female testators. Despite the fact that different manifestations of the Virgin were mentioned by thirteen men, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe appears in only five cases. The others vary, the most common being Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, Nuestra Señora del Carmen, or Nuestra Señora de la Asunción. Thus the Virgin of Guadalupe is found in the same number of cases as with female testators, and since men's wills are more numerous, it would appear that the name was more commonly mentioned by women.⁷⁵ Female saints other than the Virgin are more popular in men's testaments: Santa Gertrudis, Santa María Magdalena, Santa Efigenia, and Santa Ursula.⁷⁶ The same happens with reference to Christ, who is mentioned in different forms in nine wills, most of the time as Santo Cristo. In the case of Francisco Juan, four crucifixes are bequeathed, while Antonio de Santiago left a Holy Cross; this was very unusual for the eighteenth century whereas it was common before.⁷⁷ While there might appear to be a

⁷⁴ See the following documents as examples of the number and variety of saints: AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Agustín de la Cruz, 1755; AGNT 5, exp. 21, Testament of Mateo Serrano, 1703; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan, 1712; AHAM, Box 1718, "Testamento de don Diego Lorenzo", 1719; Box 1748-9, "Testamento de Antonio de Santiago", 1726.

⁷⁵ Cases in which the Virgin of Guadalupe is mentioned: AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681; Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737; AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Agustín de la Cruz, 1755; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan, 1712. Thus the Virgin of Guadalupe is mentioned by five of the thirteen men who refer to a manifestation of the Virgin, while in the case of women, the numbers are five against ten.

⁷⁶ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AHAM, Box 1702-4, "Testamento - Pascual de los Reyes", 1703; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Agustín de la Cruz, 1755; AHAM, Box 1718, "Testamento de don Diego Lorenzo", 1719; AHAM, Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733.

⁷⁷ AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan, 1712; AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de Antonio de Santiago", 1726.

gender parallelism in Christ being more popular with men and Guadalupe with women, it has to be acknowledged that male testators generally mentioned a greater variety of representations of the Virgin and of female saints.

An array of male saints were mentioned by male testators; San Diego was present even if not predominant, together with San Juan, San Pedro, San Antonio, San José, and San Francisco. Sometimes the names of saints were linked to the person who was put in charge of their worship, as in the case of don Juan de la Cruz, who leaves a San Juan to a daughter called Juana, and a San Ignacio to a son called Ignacio de la Cruz, or Francisco Juan, who bequeaths a San Francisco to his daughter Benita Francisca.⁷⁸ In other cases, the cult of a saint was related to an ancestor, as in Jacinto de la Cruz's testament, in which he entrusts his wife with the worship of a San Pedro, and it is no coincidence that his grandfather was don Pedro de la Cruz.⁷⁹ Finally, there are two cases in which even an image of God the Father is mentioned, testifying to the greater variety of manifestations appearing in men's wills.⁸⁰

As for the person who inherited the saints, the general pattern seems to be similar to female testators: children were the preferred heirs for sacred images, and whenever resources permitted it, saints were left to almost all of them, as in the cases of don Juan de la Cruz and Francisco Juan.⁸¹ Otherwise, the eldest child, usually male, was chosen, or more likely sons in general.⁸² An important difference compared to women's wills is that men called on their wives to take care of saints in six cases, while the converse is not seen in women's wills.⁸³ Usually this happened when there were no next-

⁷⁸ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan, 1712.

⁷⁹ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693.

⁸⁰ AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de Antonio de Santiago", 1726; Box 1728-9, "Testamento de Salvador Cayetano", 1728.

⁸¹ AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan.

⁸² AGNT 2616, exp. 7, Testament of don Pascual Domingo, 1724; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Miguel Lucas, 1733; AGNT 5, exp. 21, Testament of Mateo Serrano, 1703; AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720; AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681; Box 1735, "Testamento de Bernardino de Santiago", 1733.

⁸³ AGNT 1501, exp. 5, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693; AGNT 2345, exp. 6, Testament of don Nicolás de Tolentino, 1723; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Agustín de la Cruz, 1755; AGNT 2533,

generation heirs or when children were still too small to take care of saints, so that wives dealt with the cult until they reached adulthood. Only Juan Rafael and Pedro Pablo mentioned collaterals, a brother and a sister respectively, and both of them were widowers, so that they could not entrust them to their wives.⁸⁴

Finally, something might be learned by putting together the testaments of women and men who are part of the same family. Except for the case of don Juan Alonso and his granddaughter Pascuala María, family clusters have not proved particularly revealing in the analysis of the cult of saints, although the general impression is that wives and husbands had their own saints as personal property and bequeathed them separately to children. This is suggested by the fact that Polonia María leaves some images that are not even mentioned in her husband's will; and Adrián Josef leaves two canvases to his children, while his wife María Josefa makes no mention of saints.⁸⁵ This implies that saints were the personal property of individuals and were generally bequeathed directly by the owner to children, so that they did not appear in both testaments of a married couple.

The Cult of Saints in Context

Saints are mentioned in Nahuatl wills either as bequests made to family members or as the beneficiaries of money or a donation that the testator left for her/his cult. It was extremely common for saints to be related to the house; the expression 'I leave the house and saints' or the house 'together with saints' is present in the whole corpus in ten cases for women and twelve for men, giving some evidence of the fact that the saints were often considered the patrons or guardians of the household. In fact, indigenous houses often had a special place reserved for them within the main

exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696; AHAM, Box 1718, "Testamento de don Diego Lorenzo", 1719; Box 1741, "Testamento de Felipe de Santiago", 1741.

⁸⁴ AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Juan Rafael", 1732; Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737.

⁸⁵ AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710, and Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693; AHAM, Box 1733, "Testamento de Adrián Josef", 1733; Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

residence, as already explained in Chapter Four. Explicit connection of saints with particular lands, in which portions of land were left together with the saint for the cult, emerges clearly only in four cases for women, of which two mention the house as well, and in six cases for men, of which only one mentions the house. Tomasa Gertrudis for instance leaves a house and some land for the worship of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Nicolasa Albarrán does the same. Similarly Jacinto de la Cruz leaves some land to his wife to rent out for the service of San Pedro.⁸⁶ Thus the pattern sometimes seen, in which virtually every saint was associated with a piece of land and both changed hands together, is not unequivocally confirmed in the Toluca corpus.⁸⁷ This could be interpreted to mean that there was a growing tendency to keep all the saints together as a body associated with the household complex rather than allocating them along with the separate lands to each of the heirs. But the matter requires further investigation.

Actually, men commonly left land associated with saints, while only Pedro Pablo mentions magueyes.⁸⁸ It seems that leaving magueyes to be used for the service of saints was more common for women; in fact five female testators out of 30 left some plants, usually one or two magueyes per saint, but in some cases even two furrows or rows.⁸⁹ The use of magueyes or land can be explained by the fact that men had easier access to landed property, while it was common for women of the Toluca Valley to be involved in production of pulque and similar beverages and as a consequence to possess magueyes, as will be explained in the second part of the chapter. Thus it seems that both genders were dedicating to saints the resources that were more available to them according to their daily activities. For example, Lucas Damián entrusts his wife

⁸⁶ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Tomasa Gertrudis", 1738; AGNT 2533, exp. 1, Testament of Nicolasa Albarrán, 1737; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Jacinto de la Cruz, 1693. The other cases are: AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710; AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681; Box 1728-9, "Testamento de Salvador Cayetano", 1728; AGNT 2533, exp. 5, Testament of don Juan de la Cruz, 1691; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692; AGNT 2298, exp. 5, Testament of Francisco Juan, 1712.

⁸⁷ Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 239-42.

⁸⁸ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737.

⁸⁹ AHAM, Box 1731(2), "Testamento de Isabel María", 1731; Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Mauricio Josefa", 1732; AGNT 2541, exp. 21, Testament of Juana María, 1746; AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717; AGNT 1501, exp. 3, Testament of Polonia María, 1710.

with providing some pigs, as well as gold, for the service of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción.⁹⁰ Such an interpretation is reinforced by the fact that in some cases men left other property that was typical of their activities, as with Juan Rafael, who left a yoke of oxen to be used to serve an image of San Antonio, and a tool to be sold for candles.⁹¹

A special case is that of Elena de la Cruz, who leaves not only a piece of land and much money for her favoured San Miguel de Aparicio, but also amounts of money, from half a peso to twenty pesos, for the cult of numerous saints (see Appendix).⁹² Moreover, she also provides them with decorations and vestments (a canopy, a red altar hanging, a monstrance, a chasuble, a cape, and renewed gilding) and with financial help to build their chapels in some cases. Nothing similar is found in men's testaments in the corpus. The case of Elena de la Cruz allows us to enter another aspect of the cult of saints, the connection between a saint and a *tlaxilacalli* or *altepetl*, an aspect that was prominent in the Testaments of Culhuacan. In fact, Elena de la Cruz lives in the *tlaxilacalli* called San Miguel Aticpac, and has a special devotion to the saint San Miguel de Aparicio. There are two other cases of female testators revealing this connection, Pascuala Melchora, of San Juan Bautista, who leaves a small maguey to San Juan Bautista, and Pascuala María, of Santa María de la Asunción, who is devoted to Nuestra Señora de la Asunción.⁹³ Three cases are also present in men's wills: Pedro Pablo, whose *tlaxilacalli* is named after San Juan Bautista, and who worships the same San Juan Bautista; don Juan Alonso, of the *tlaxilacalli* of Santa María de la Asunción, who has an image of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción; and Lucas Damián, who lives in the *tlaxilacalli* of Santa María de la Concepción, and serves the saint Santa María de la Concepción.⁹⁴ Thus although the saints are generally so closely

⁹⁰ AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696.

⁹¹ AHAM, Box 1732(2), "Testamento de Juan Rafael", 1732.

⁹² AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711.

⁹³ AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala María, 1762.

⁹⁴ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737; AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of don Juan Alonso, 1692; AGNT 2533, exp. 2, Testament of Lucas Damián, 1696.

associated with the household that it can be taken for granted that they would remain in the house, at times they would be used by the wider community.

As for the cult itself, the provision of candles, flowers, and incense is often mentioned, together with the celebration of a low or high mass on the saint's feast day. Candles were of European origin, and this is confirmed by the fact that only the Spanish word *candela* is used. On the other hand, the use of flowers for the worship was typical of indigenous culture from ancient times, and the Nahuatl term *xochitl* is found almost every time that flowers are mentioned. Finally, incense was employed in both Spanish and indigenous ceremonies of worship; our testators use only native Nahuatl terms, such as *copalli* (copal incense) or *popochtli* (perfumed smoke). While only female testators seem to be concerned with providing a mass for the saints, curiously male testators were the only ones to mention the sweeping of a saint's altar or place, an activity that was normally associated with women from precolonial times and which had a strong ritual significance.⁹⁵ Candles, flowers, incense and sweeping were thus the essential components of worship, a concept that was rendered in the testaments through the expression *tlatequipanoa*, 'to serve them' (referring to the saints), which was used in almost every will. Of the four elements, all but candles were specifically associated with the worship of preconquest religious images.

Conclusion on the Cult of Saints

According to what is seen in the bequests included in testaments, the cult of Christian saints seems to have been more developed among indigenous men than among women, at least in a material sense. The corpus confirms the findings of Stephanie Wood; male possessors of sacred images were more numerous and the holdings of saints were larger and more varied in the case of men.⁹⁶ However, a good number of women possessed and bequeathed images, carrying out an active role that sometimes reached

⁹⁵ AGNT 2546, exp. 16, Testament of Gaspar Melchor, 1720; AHAM, Box 1748-9, "Testamento de don Baltasar de los Reyes", 1681. Louise Burkhart discusses the meaning of sweeping in "Mexican Women", pp. 33-8.

⁹⁶ Wood, "Adopted Saints", pp. 277-8.

the public level directly through the donation of images to the community church or provision for the worship of community images, as in the cases of Pascuala María and Elena de la Cruz. Moreover, women had a special veneration for Nuestra Señora of Guadalupe, testifying how the indigenous world had assimilated the cult. This distinguishes this period from the earlier ones, even if it was not yet as predominant over other saints as in later times. While this cult was compatible with the image of the Virgin used as a model of a Christian woman, it does not necessarily signify the application of that model in women's everyday life, as already discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

What was created was a sort of 'middle way': Christian saints were adopted but in the context of indigenous practices. The cult itself provides some evidence of the intermingling of traditions in its mixture of European and indigenous elements, such as candles and sweeping. In this chapter and the previous one we have seen that the saints were intimately linked with the household, representing its continuity and their close association with its property, apparently the continuation of a preconquest tradition⁹⁷; most of the testators bequeathed the images together with the house, meaning that they were to remain inside it as guardians of the family.

A last aspect of the cult of the saints that is worthy of consideration, even though it remains somewhat speculative, is that other studies have shown a strict relationship between an image of the saint and a piece of land that was left for its worship, that in a sense the saint possessed, at least as a tendency and possibly as a widespread practice. This connection does not appear common here.⁹⁸ Thus the decline of the practice of designating land for the saints, observed by Stephanie Wood for the late eighteenth century, can be suggested for the first half of the century as well.⁹⁹ It is possible that future research with an expanded corpus will throw a different light on the association

⁹⁷ See Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, pp. 236-9.

⁹⁸ See Lockhart, *The Nahuas*, already quoted in the analysis.

⁹⁹ Wood, "Adopted Saints", pp. 290-1.

of saints and land, but by present indications the provisional conclusions here are more likely to be confirmed.

Healing

This section explores another context linked to religious practices in which women's private sphere is opened up to contact with the outside world: indigenous healing practices. From ancient times the Nahuas treated illnesses with specific medicines and remedies, a lore which was retained particularly by women.¹⁰⁰ These traditional practices are another activity through which indigenous women broke out of the space of their domestic realm, either by going to assist the person in need or by opening the door of their own homes to people in search of treatment. Moreover, healing practices are a window through which the encounter of indigenous tradition and Christian practices can be observed, since they are essentially based on a strong attachment to ancient beliefs that were constantly questioned by the Church.

A specific case will be helpful in illustrating the situation, involving the indigenous people working at the hacienda of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Tlachialoyan, near Toluca.¹⁰¹ In 1754, the landlord reported a group of Indians to the *Juzgado* because his son had found a group, mainly women, gathered in a house in the night, with candles on the altar of the saints and in front of some "figurillas de barro" representing individuals and animals, to which they were offering "tamales, manzanas, platanos, cañas, unos pedernales, vidrios negros que llaman de Moctezuma, con música de arpa y guitarra". When the women realised that a Spaniard had seen them, they explained that they were making an offering, "una ofrenda", for an ill child, following the instructions of the woman who was treating him. They begged not to be dispossessed of the figurines, and were even ready to pay to retain them, but in the end the landlord reported the group to the *Juzgado* and the figurines were deposited there.

¹⁰⁰ In a broader sense, the role played by women as *parteras*, midwives, would be part of this category, but it is not to be discussed here for lack of evidence in the documents of the corpus. For a brief reference to the Church's attitude towards indigenous midwives, see Chapter Two.

¹⁰¹ AHAM, Box 1754, "Causa seguida contra indios y indias de la hacienda de Buenavista".

During the whole colonial period Spanish civil and religious authorities fought against similar practices, taking them as the expression of pagan beliefs that needed to be eradicated, or even as an evidence of witchcraft. Thus accusations of performing traditional healing practices often overlapped with those of witchcraft, and references to both of them are innumerable in the documentation produced by the *Juzgado*. Here I will not enter into the subject of witchcraft itself; rather I will analyse healing practices as part of women's everyday activities, underscoring their attachment to tradition and at the same time their flexibility in incorporating new elements. In this connection I will consider eleven legal cases in Spanish related to the issue found in the Archivo del Arzobispado.¹⁰²

Whenever somebody was ill, it was common to make an offering, or *huentli* in Nahuatl, as the first thing, that is an offering to the gods to ask for a cure, as was the case with the women of Tlachialoyan. A typical offering could have been "una polla muerta emplumada, tamales, juguetes de barro, dos cabos de vela de cera, [...] dos ollitas de pulque", as with the one that two men found near a spring called Apitzalco, in the jurisdiction of Metepec.¹⁰³ Another practice that is extremely frequent in the documents is the cleansing that was called in Spanish a *limpia* (a Nahuatl term does not emerge in the records). The meaning of this term is well known: a treatment through which the body of a patient is freed from the evil spirits that have caused the disease. However, it is very interesting to see how this practice was described by an indigenous woman of the jurisdiction of Calimaya, who attended a cleansing carried out by María, alias 'la Joaquina': "tendiendo sobre un lienzo blanco al enfermo

¹⁰² In addition to the case of the hacienda of Tlachialoyan, see: AHAM, Box 1765, "Denuncia que da Desiderio José Gutierrez"; Box 1764(1), "Ana María de la Encarnación india del barrio de San Bernardino sobre que se le reputa por hechicera"; Box 1747, "Caso en contra de María Magdalena por hechicería"; Box 1745-47, "Informaciones sobre María, conocida como Joaquina, acusada de abusos de curación parecidos a arte diabólica"; Box 1760, "Causa de fe contra Lucia María del pueblo de Tecajic a pedimento de Francisco Nicolás"; Box 1734-35, "Denuncias en contra de Isabel Balero alias la turca"; Box 1728, "Autos seguidos contra Salvador de Santiago y Petrona María su mujer"; Box 1736, "Autos seguidos contra Francisca Quiteriana, india, natural del pueblo de San Felipe"; Box 1762, "Acusación de brujería a una india viuda de Juan Antonio"; Box 1745, "Declaración de Cayetano Perez sobre Bentura conjurador de granizo".

¹⁰³ AHAM, Box 1734-35, "Denuncias en contra de Isabel Balero alias la turca".

desnudo, y a soplidos untándole por todo el cuerpo una yerba que llaman estafiate, dicen que le van sacando del cuerpo a refregones y soplidos los *eccames*, cuyo término significa espíritus".¹⁰⁴ Evil spirits materialised in the form of sand, hair, or feathers. Another essential component of the *limpia*, not mentioned in the example perhaps because it was so common, was copal, or incense; the body was in fact fumigated, sometimes with dangerous effects, as the same woman declared had happened when 'la Joaquina' attempted to cleanse her daughter: "y fue tanto el copal con que la sahumó que hasta la boca se le ha hinchado".

Documents leave us some details on other practices as well, such as drinking water together with some secret ingredients to get rid of a bewitchment (*hechizo* in Spanish), or throwing some *cempaxochitl* (from Nahuatl *cempohualxochitl*, the marigold) in a jar filled with water to find out which illness a person was suffering from. However, offerings to gods and cleansings were the most common practices found in the corpus.

Despite the fact that healing of this type was carried out by both genders, the cases before the *Juzgado* show a clear prevalence of women, an indication of the essential role Nahua women had in preserving and transmitting traditional knowledge. The fact that ancient healing practices were very common in the Toluca Valley in the eighteenth century allows one to conclude that rural areas remained attached to these traditions despite the Church's efforts to eliminate them. Some scholars have interpreted the key role of indigenous women in this realm as a form of resistance to the penetration of Spanish-Catholic cultural hegemony; witchcraft and magic were a sort of weapon that women, enclosed within their private space, could use, reversing the image of their

¹⁰⁴ AHAM, Box 1745-47, "Informaciones sobre María, conocida como Joaquina"; "Having the sick person stretched out naked on a piece of white linen, and by blowing anointing his whole body with an herb they call *estafiate*, they say that they go along removing from the body by rubbing and blowing the *eccames*, a term that means spirits". There are two words that amount to Nahuatl loanwords in Spanish, the exact equivalent of the many Spanish loanwords I have noted and commented on in Nahuatl texts. They show the diffusion of vocabulary and cultural elements in both directions, and in a very similar manner. *Eccames* comes from *eecatl*, wind, in the plural form in Nahuatl plus an 's' for the Spanish plural. The other term, *estafiate*, comes from the Nahuatl *iztahuatl*, an herb, which has been indicated as *estafiatl* in the *Relaciones Geograficas*: "que es una yerba que llaman enciencios, echada en agua, y con aquella se rocían y báñanse", in Alfredo López Austin, *Textos de medicina náhuatl* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2000), p. 126. It is interesting to find loans, hence interpenetration and influence on Spanish culture, in the area of popular religion and herbal lore.

association with the Devil into a positive instrument.¹⁰⁵ The legal cases that have been used do not provide clear examples of the use of magic against Spaniards; in fact the practices take place mainly among indigenous people; what they show, however, is the maintenance of traditions, in which women played an essential role.

The clergy's battle against traditional healing led them to deal with indigenous women directly, and many were punished. Normally a woman accused of being a healer (a *curandera* in Spanish; the Nahuatl *ticitl*, healer or physician, does not appear in these records) was forced to attend the main mass in the church standing up, "cruzados los brazos en forma de penitente".¹⁰⁶ Then after being granted a pardon by the priest, she had to go to mass regularly for a couple of months and attend the explanation of the Christian doctrine to learn how to behave as a good Christian woman. These practices remind us of what already seen in Chapter Three for the cases of polygamy. Sometimes there was also corporal punishment, 25 lashes "para su escarmiento y ejemplo a los demás"¹⁰⁷, as happened to Petrona María, of San Pedro Tototepec, in the jurisdiction of Toluca. Traditional healing was seen as an offence against Catholic beliefs, for which reason the explanation of the doctrine was considered an essential step to redemption; in this light, it is understandable why women who wanted to deny any accusation of this kind swore in the name of God and gave assurances that they were true Christians.

Though Irene Silverblatt and Judith Farberman underscore the fact that most of the women accused of being witches or healers were widows, I have found no conclusive evidence of this in the selected documents for the Toluca Valley. In many cases no

¹⁰⁵ See Silverblatt, *Moon*, pp. 187-95, Stern, *Secret History*, pp. 108-10, and the discussion of the topic in Chapter One. Ruth Behar gives an interesting view of women using witchcraft to reverse their subordination to men, rather than to resist Spanish acculturation, in "Sexual Witchcraft".

¹⁰⁶ AHAM, Box 1736, "Autos seguidos contra Francisca Quiteriana". The Nahuatl term *ticitl* is discussed in Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, *Treatise on the Heathen Superstitions That Today Live Among the Indians Native to This New Spain, 1629* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), p. 157; it can be translated as sage, doctor, seer, sorcerer.

¹⁰⁷ AHAM, Box 1728, "Autos seguidos contra Salvador de Santiago".

details are given on the status of the accused woman, but others show how both widows and married women were exposed to the accusation.¹⁰⁸

Despite the opposition of the Church, traditional healing practices were so common in indigenous communities that it was more normal to have *curanderas* in a pueblo than to have none. Furthermore women themselves were not too worried about this kind of accusation; in fact, only Ana María de la Encarnación, of San Bernardino (barrio of Toluca), wanted the man who had accused her to return her "mi crédito y mi honra de haberme deshonrado ante muchas personas".¹⁰⁹ The others did not regard it as threatening their honour.

The preservation of ancient beliefs is what emerges clearly from these cases, but it cannot be said that healing practices were maintained free from any contamination by Christian elements. In some cases, together with the traditional cleansing, sacraments and prayers were suggested to help achieve the result. Holy water from the church was also used to banish evil spirits. A María Magdalena, of Tenango del Valle, even used the Christian idea of death and resurrection to save another woman from a bewitchment, saying that she had to drink a beverage "para que muriera con ella y resucitarla después, por que el tal hechizo no había de sanar menos que muriendo y volviendo a resucitar". In fact, as reported by Ruiz de Alarcón, the idea of resurrection was already common among healers in the seventeenth century.¹¹⁰

A final feature of healing practices that emerges from these cases is the web of co-operation and solidarity existing among women of the same family group or community, as already seen in Chapter Three and occasionally in Chapter Four in the

¹⁰⁸ Silverblatt, *Moon*, p. 167; Judith Farberman, "Las hechiceras de Tuama. Mujeres y delitos en un pueblo de indios colonial, Santiago del Estero, 1761", presentation at the AHILA Congress, Oporto, 21-25 September 1999. From the present corpus: AHAM, Box 1728, "Autos seguidos contra Salvador de Santiago y Petrona María su mujer"; Box 1736, "Autos seguidos contra Francisca Quiteriana, india, natural del pueblo de San Felipe"; Box 1765, "Denuncia que da Desiderio José Gutierrez".

¹⁰⁹ AHAM, Box 1764(1), "Ana María de la Encarnación". On the popularity of healing practices among the natives, see Farberman, "Hechiceras de Tuama".

¹¹⁰ The case referred to is: AHAM, Box 1747, "Caso en contra de María Magdalena". For some similar cases, see Ruiz de Alarcón, *Treatise*, pp. 184, 187.

analysis of testaments. The example of the group of Tlachialoyan is clear in this respect: they were mainly women, and women organised the gathering and the offering, providing the figurines and following the directions of the female healer who was attending to the infant. Another case is illuminating, that of Isabel Valero, of Metepec, known as a *curandera*, who happened to fall ill, so that she was the one who needed a propitiatory offering to achieve her healing.¹¹¹ In that situation her mother Pascuala and her daughter Antonia gathered and arranged the cure. Similar networks of solidarity have been observed in other areas, while Ruth Behar points out that co-operation among women to exchange practices and remedies operated also at interethnic and interclass levels, since Spanish and mestizo women often turned to indigenous women, who were deemed to be specialists.¹¹²

Conclusion on Healing Practices

Thus it can be said that despite colonisation and overall Spanish cultural hegemony, Nahua communities remained strongly attached to ancient remedies and practices to purify the body. The legal cases used have not revealed cases of open and straight resistance to Spanish influence, in the sense that bewitchment was not applied against a Spaniard as a sort of revenge; rather events always took place within indigenous communities. Also, indigenous people clearly thought of their healing practices as compatible with Christianity, using the altar of the saints as a locus for some of their activities. Nevertheless, it has been possible to show how strongly ancient traditions were preserved as far as healing is concerned, especially by indigenous women. It is true that women's everyday world was permeable to Catholic beliefs even in this realm, since we have seen that some of them were added to traditional practices, but this permeability did not mean complete or passive acceptance. New elements were incorporated and adapted to traditional practices, the latter apparently retaining a privileged space in women's perception of the world.

¹¹¹ AHAM, Box 1734-5, "Denuncias en contra de Isabel Balero alias la turca".

¹¹² Ruth Behar, "Sexual Witchcraft", p. 192; Judith Farberman underscores networks of solidarity among the women of Santiago del Estero, in "Hechiceras de Tuama".

Besides illustrating the dynamics of indigenous reaction to Spanish influence, the selected cases are also a good example of Spanish penetration into indigenous women's private domain. In fact, women were brought out of the household sphere to be judged for 'pagan practices' and their life was publicly examined through calling witnesses from the whole community. Their reprehensible behaviour was measured against the model of a Christian woman, which was indicated as the ideal that sinners had to strive for. In addition the domestic realm was opened by the women themselves through the contact with the people who needed a remedy. For these reasons, healing constitutes an arena in which the private and public spheres overlap and interact.

PART II: ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Another sphere in which the household space was opened up is with economic activities that women carried out to support their families; these activities bore the stamp of contact with Spaniards, but many aspects of ancient practices were preserved and reformulated within the colonial context. The cultivation of magueyes and the production of alcoholic beverages were among the most common, and they are analysed here as the only well documented cases found in the sources used for this study. However I am aware that women's market activity is known in a general way to have been a very prominent feature of their lives.¹¹³ Moreover, the property holding that has been presented in Chapter Four allows one to speculate on women's economic role in the possession, transfer, and management of land and animals. I am conscious that the economic activities are as manifold and significant as women's religious activities in connecting them with the wider world, and much of my future research will be devoted to acquiring an expanded view of this dimension.

¹¹³ Sahagún, *Historia general*, vol. 3, pp. 138-56; Rodríguez, "La mujer y la familia", pp. 19-20; Pescador, "Vanishing Woman", pp. 618-9.

Production of traditional alcoholic beverages such as pulque had been a typical activity of indigenous communities since ancient times. It is said that the Nahuas followed strict rules that aimed to avoid abuse and that the regulatory system collapsed after Spanish colonisation. Increased consumption can also be seen as a form of indigenous reaction to the changes and disruption accompanying Spanish conquest. Such notions are speculative, but for whatever reason, the production and sale of alcoholic beverages did increase dramatically. Moreover, fees on the production of such beverages were an important source of income for colonial authorities, so that there was little interest in reducing drinking; it was more profitable to tax it.¹¹⁴ Information from the Toluca Valley confirms this general picture, for civil and religious authorities left many reports and comments on the widespread production and popular consumption of alcoholic drinks extracted from the maguey plant. To mention a typical example of these complaints, an alarmed archbishop José Lanciego y Eguilaz, during an inspection tour in 1717, exhorted the parish priests of the Valley to intervene to reduce drinking because it affected the supposedly weak indigenous conscience so much.¹¹⁵ However, as usual, his words were not strong enough to limit consumption, for the beverages continued to be an essential element of ceremonies, feasts, and offerings.

But what role did indigenous women play in the matter? First of all, women were often victims; most of the cases of violence and mistreatment that we have examined in Chapter Three were committed by men after drinking too much. Yet, the documentation collected shows that women also played an active role. For one thing, they were consumers, as revealed by some comments and details in the documents. They went to *pulquerías*, establishments devoted to the sale and consumption of pulque, or drank during celebrations, although in a rather limited fashion compared to

¹¹⁴ Taylor, *Embriaguez*, pp. 60-1, 115; Alonso de Zorita, *The Lords of New Spain. The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lord of New Spain* (London: Phoenix House, 1963), pp. 132-3.

¹¹⁵ AHAM, José Lanciego y Eguilaz, *Libros de visita* L 10A/4, f. 114.

men; in fact, I have found only one reference to an inebriated woman in the corpus of Spanish litigation, whereas drunk men are commonly recorded.¹¹⁶

The most important role women played in relation to beverages extracted from maguey was as producers and sellers. In fact, the beverages were produced at home, and the activity grew out of the everyday domestic activities of an indigenous woman. Despite the fact that some references have been found to men being involved in the production and especially sale of pulque, the general perception is that this activity was basically in the hands of women.¹¹⁷

The Nahuatl testaments from the Valley are revealing on the association of women with magueyes. The fact that magueyes were left to heirs or dedicated to saints, *cofradías*, or to pay for burials and funerals can be taken as indicating their commercial value, which was linked to the production of alcoholic beverages. With this in mind, fourteen women mention magueyes in their wills, against only nine men; the difference testifies to women's significant involvement in cultivation of the plant and production of beverages. It is true that six women left only small quantities of magueyes to support the cult of saints or a *cofradía*; however, at least three of them possessed other magueyes that were left to heirs, and the other female testators left magueyes specifically to be cultivated. Thus it can be said that this plant was of economic rather than religious significance.

It was normal for women to possess quite large numbers of magueyes, as in the case of María Josefa, who left 30 plants each to her two children (see Appendix).¹¹⁸ She did not bequeath any other property, although she mentions that she owed 43 pesos for the harvest, which involved scraping the leaves of the magueyes. As a consequence we can speculate that she was involved in the production of pulque as her primary activity,

¹¹⁶ For the case of the inebriated woman see AHAM, Box 1750(1), "Pascuala Lionor india del pueblo de Catitlan acusa a los suegros de su hija"; another case of a woman consuming alcoholic beverages: AHAM, Box 1751(1), "Los seguidos de oficio de la justicia eclesiástica de esta ciudad del Señor San Josef de Toluca contra Pedro de Cuenca y Margarita Bernal, vecinos de Tlacotepec".

¹¹⁷ Taylor, *Embriaguez*, pp. 86-7.

¹¹⁸ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737.

besides the usual housework. The size of the debt implies a large scale of activity; it also implies that she employed many people or made contracts for the harvest. Pascuala Melchora is another interesting woman in this respect; she bequeathed 25 magueyes to her daughter Juana María, while possessing 30 more that the daughter is said to have taken, and she provided money for another five plants to be bought.¹¹⁹ The technical terms used for the plants show Pascuala Melchora to have been highly competent and fully in charge of the cultivation and harvest of the plants, as well as having the power to bequeath them.¹²⁰ These are the most prominent cases, but in many others women referred to lots with magueyes on them, or rows of magueyes, and consequently they must have possessed a quite substantial number of plants.¹²¹ Since magueyes were normally cultivated for commercial purposes, such ownership documents women's significant involvement both in the production and then sale of the beverages. It seems that there was no distinction between widows and married women among those involved, both types taking part in production and sale of beverages. Moreover, no distinction was made in terms of gender when bequeathing magueyes; both men and women inherited them.

As for men, only nine testators mention magueyes in their wills, four of them dedicating the plants to saints or *cofradías*. However, Juan Crisóstomo and Pedro Pablo also bequeathed magueyes to heirs, and the former has a great deal of landed property dedicated to the cultivation of magueyes.¹²² Male testators almost always possessed landed property even when having a lot of magueyes; only in two cases did men not bequeath any land while possessing magueyes. This is slightly different with female testators; it is true that most of the women bequeathed both magueyes and land,

¹¹⁹ AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717.

¹²⁰ What is noteworthy here is that for various types of plants she gives specific names, probably referring to the size and the time of harvesting. Some magueyes were defined as 'capones', which would refer to being cut in some way, possibly for the draining of the juice, some others as 'maiden', *ichpochtili* in Nahuatl, explained in the Spanish translation of the testament as just reaching maturity; finally the 25 magueyes are said to have stalks, *quiquio* in Nahuatl, or *quiyotes* in Spanish.

¹²¹ AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de Elena de la Cruz", 1711; AGNT 2303, exp. 1, Testament of Lucas de la Cruz, 1695. The term 'rows' is given by the Spanish *ringleras*, or the Nahuatl *panitli*, such as in Elena de la Cruz's will, or *tecpanitli*, in Lucas de la Cruz's will.

¹²² AHAM, Box 1700-1, "Testamento de Juan Crisóstomo", 1701; Box 1738, "Testamento de Pedro Pablo", 1737.

but Dominga María and María Josefa did not possess any land while bequeathing a large number of magueyes. The case of Pascuala Melchora was similar, since she possessed a significant number of magueyes but only one piece of land.¹²³ As a consequence, it seems that contrary to men, women who were deeply involved in cultivation of magueyes did not possess agricultural land, or only very little. The implications of this observation remain to be fully explored. It might imply that, despite its profitability, the maguey industry was in a sense rather marginal. Apart from magueyes dedicated to the cult, the number of plants mentioned in men's testaments was quite large, at least a few rows, but it never reached the numbers reported by female testators; this strengthens the conclusion that cultivation of the plant and production of beverages were mainly women's tasks. The other cases of male testators mentioning magueyes are not particularly noteworthy, apart from Ambrosio Lorenzo and Felipe de Santiago, whose magueyes went to cover funeral and burial expenses.¹²⁴

Women usually cultivated magueyes in a lot close to the house, then at the proper time the plants were scraped and harvested to collect the juice, which was left to ferment. From the documentation consulted, there remains some doubt as to whether women were just in charge of harvesting, which we have some definite evidence for, or whether they also did the scraping and collecting themselves, as in the case of Pascuala María that has been analysed in Chapter Three.¹²⁵ Once the beverage was ready, they sold it in their houses or they went to pueblo markets, sometimes accompanied by men, as in the case of Manuela Juana, who went with her cousin's husband, probably because she did not have a husband who could accompany her. However, married

¹²³ AGNCi 664, exp. 2, Testament of Dominga María, 1759; AHAM, Box 1738, "Testamento de María Josefa", 1737; AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717.

¹²⁴ AHAM, Box 1716, "Testamento de Ambrosio Lorenzo", 1716; Box 1741-2, "Testamento de Felipe de Sanitago", 1741.

¹²⁵ AHAM, Box 1760, "Autos hechos en virtud de denuncia contra Pascuala María y Antonio, sobre incontinencia"; also, Pascuala Melchora says that her daughter scraped 25 magueyes, in AGNHJ 326, exp. 2, Testament of Pascuala Melchora, 1717.

women also went to markets to sell beverages unaccompanied by their husbands, as was the case with Rafaela Martínez, from Calimaya.¹²⁶

Normally producers of pulque had to have a licence provided by colonial authorities; in fact, in some cases in the documentation, women declared that they produced and sold beverages in total compliance with the law, as with Felipa de la Cruz, who declared that villagers went to her house to buy pulque "por tener ejercicio para venderlo".¹²⁷ However, a greater part of production and sale was carried out illegally, within the secure space of the household, not in regular *pulquerías*, in order to avoid paying taxes, or in pueblo markets, as mentioned above. In the case of pulque the existence of licences is well documented, whereas nothing is said for tepache, which is only defined as 'bebida prohibida' in a general sense.¹²⁸ Tepache was well known in the whole Valley; references in the documentation are too numerous to count. In one of these it is defined as being made of pulque, water and "panocha de miel prieta".¹²⁹

According to reports issued by local authorities, their expeditions to seek out and punish unlicensed producers usually ended with the throwing away of pulque or tepache and fines to be paid. This is exactly what happened in the pueblo of Ocoyacac (Tenango del Valle) in 1765.¹³⁰ The investigating official went to the houses of Martina Manuela, Micaela Magdalena and Micaela Ana to verify whether they were "corrientes tepacherías conocidas por tales", as if he already knew what he was going to find. In fact, Martina Manuela had already been convicted twice for production and sale of tepache, but despite this she continued in the activity; in her house a pitcher of tepache was found hidden among the nopal cactus. Being asked for an explanation, she answered that "lo pone para vender porque no tiene con que pagar a su rey el tributo, y

¹²⁶ AHAM, Box 1741-42, "Autos ejecutorios por violaciones"; AGNM 15, exp. 9, ff. 46-64, "Solicitud; Lorenzo Antonio de Arriaga y Rafaela Martínez; Calimaya", 1765.

¹²⁷ AHAM, Box 1761, "Felix de la Cruz expone la situación de su hija que se encuentra 'padeciendo en un deposito'".

¹²⁸ Taylor says that pulque was the only beverage authorised by law, while tepache was forbidden in 1631 and many other times afterwards; Taylor, *Embriaguez*, pp. 89-90.

¹²⁹ AGNCR 207, exp. 1, "Haberlas sorprendido en la venta de bebidas prohibidas", 1765.

¹³⁰ AGNCR 207, exp. 1, "Haberlas sorprendido en la venta de bebidas prohibidas", 1765.

las obenciones a su cura". Whether Martina Manuela was really forced to sell tepache or not to pay her dues we cannot say, her complaint was aimed directly at the civil and religious authorities. Such statements show a critical attitude on the part of indigenous people and a willingness to express it. The second woman, Micaela Magdalena, gave another explanation for the fact that she was hiding "una olla de a medio". "Estaba mala de la barriga", for which reason she prepared the tepache and hid it so that her husband could not find it. It is true that since early colonial times these beverages had been used to cure all kinds of disease; pulque and the like had so many uses that it was extremely difficult to eradicate them.¹³¹ Of the last woman, Micaela Ana, nothing is known, since she ran away with her husband before the authorities could find her. In the end, the result was the same: the official ordered that all jugs be destroyed and the tepache thrown away.

We have documentation of another inspection that took place in the pueblo of San Miguel Chapultepec, close to Calimaya, where the alguacil mayor went directly to the house of Rosa María, a native widow, and after finding some tepache ordered that the governor and his sons be arrested.¹³² It seems that the woman herself was not punished, but she was the immediate cause of the alguacil mayor's reaction; in this case as well, authorities were sure beforehand that alcoholic beverages would be found in the house of an indigenous woman. It is not yet clear whether the governor was arrested merely for allowing the establishment to function, or whether he was suspected of actively financing or supplying the operation in some way.

Conclusion on Maguey Cultivation and Production of Beverages

The cases presented here show how the model of a Christian woman enclosed in the private sphere is put in question by a reality in which women easily opened their

¹³¹ Taylor, *Embriaguez*, pp. 94-5.

¹³² AGNCr 217, exp. 2, ff. 6-12, "Fabricación de tepache; acusados: Felipe de Santiago, Domingo de la Cruz, Isidro José y Rosa María; Metepec", 1745.

household to customers looking for 'un medio de pulque', or even left the domestic space to sell beverages in neighbouring villages. While civil colonial authorities tried to control and tax the activity and the Church made efforts to limit consumption, indigenous women carried on in their everyday life with an ancient occupation, giving proof of active reaction to the change provoked by colonisation. In fact, production and consumption of pulque and tepache continued to be an essential part of indigenous women's everyday life, often eluding the authorities' effort to control the activity.

Cultivation of maguey and more specifically production and sale of beverages extracted from the plant are significant fields in which to search for details on women's everyday life. In fact, comparative analysis shows that women were more numerous in bequeathing magueyes than men and possessed larger quantities of the plants. Furthermore, it seems that they made this production a major activity, for women who possessed a good quantity of magueyes usually had a small amount of landed property. On the other hand, men who mentioned the plant in their testaments also possessed many pieces of land, so other agricultural activities were probably more important for them than maguey cultivation.

Women's participation in the maguey and pulque industry should be viewed as only one of many economic activities that may have started inside the household complex and its associated lands, but brought women into the broader society and economy in a meaningful and indeed essential way.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Viewing the chapter as a whole, we see a composite image of the indigenous world, containing multiple aspects, some of which are apparently very different from each other. However, all the sections are linked together by a few common characteristics that emerge as typical traits of the indigenous society of the Valley of Toluca in the early eighteenth century.

The practices discussed here, from funeral rituals to the cultivation of magueyes, have a public dimension in that they take place under the community's eyes, thereby connecting the indigenous household to the wider world. The opening up of the domestic realm is at times caused by the ritual itself, such as in the case of funeral practices, or deliberately brought about by women, as with healing or sale of beverages. On the Spanish side, we see an active intervention of colonial authority in the indigenous private sphere, in its ongoing campaign of conversion and *castellanización*. Moreover, religious and economic practices put the indigenous communities in contact with Spanish civil and religious authorities in the sense of creating a space of encounter that was particularly relevant for women. It is true that, by the eighteenth century, both genders were exposed to Spanish influence in their everyday life, but indigenous men came into contact with Spaniards more often due to their official and public roles. Being denied access to public office, women became exposed to Spanish influence especially when they resorted to the parish church and when Spanish authorities acted directly in their lives, as happened with accusations of pagan practices or illegal production of beverages.

And yet if we see women operating on a much broader stage, in many if not most cases the household base remains an essential part of the picture. In the Christian religious sphere especially, many of the patterns observed in this chapter are related to those seen in Chapter Four, which examined the household. The people chosen to be responsible for a woman's mass and funeral were exactly those chosen to be her principal heirs. The criteria for bequeathing images of saints were exactly the same as those for inheritance of landed property within the household regime in general. Healing and pulque sale went far beyond the household framework but began there and could not have existed without that base. Indeed, the same appears to be true for many men's activities as well.

We are reminded that the distinction between public and private, so familiar in the European world, may not be an entirely appropriate feature within a scheme where the Nahua *altepetl* or larger sociopolitical entity was divided into various *tlaxilacalli* or constituent parts, each a microcosm of it, and each *tlaxilacalli* in turn consisted of

household complexes, each in a sense again a microcosm, for they too contained separate dwellings and separate nuclear families. A 'private' family saint could have a prominent place in the general *altepetl* church, and the 'public' *altepetl* saint could be displayed in a household. In any case, the evidence presented in this chapter suggests an interpenetration of different social levels that greatly complicates the common notion of a private domestic space for women and a public space for men.

The analysis of several practices has shown how often women had an active role in carrying them out, once again going beyond the model of a Christian woman enclosed within a domestic space. In this sense, healing and production and sale of alcoholic beverages have been particularly illuminating, and the challenge these activities represented may explain why, whenever colonial authorities accused women in connection with these practices, they held up the model of a good Christian woman as the way to redemption. As far as funeral practices and the cult of saints are concerned, the cases of women giving dispositions for their burial and shroud or bequeathing saints are numerous and show women's initiative. A few clear gender distinctions are found in the realm of religious practices, such as a tendency towards different shrouds for women and men. A significant difference can also be observed in the veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe; while there are cases of men who worshipped her, women are definitely more numerous. Yet it seems that the identification of a sphere as typically female, as in the case of healing or production of pulque, is not possible within the framework of overtly Christian religious practices. Both genders show very similar traits in terms of funeral, shroud, burial and offerings, and also in the worship of saints, although in this particular aspect men seemed to possess more and more varied images.

Another common aspect that links all the activities previously discussed is the reformulation of Christian principles and Spanish cultural elements and their incorporation in traditional conceptual frameworks. Christian funeral rites, formulas and saints were assimilated in a way that was not new in itself but dated back to the early seventeenth century or even earlier. Some new elements emerged, such as the devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe, the different practices with respect to the cult of

saints (weakening of the link with land, for instance), and the contribution to the Jerusalem fund, but the basic rituals and words remained almost the same. This was not a stubbornness to preserve tradition in a form as close as possible to ancient practice; rather it was the necessity of reformulating cultural practices in the wake of conquest, in a way that incorporated new elements within already-acquired knowledge. The result was new and original, but it was based on ancient practices, such as healing remedies, or the worship with flowers and sweeping. The continuation of ancient practices has long been observed for the early colonial period, and it is interesting to see that they continued into the eighteenth century as well.

This process of assimilation and elaboration, already mentioned at the end of Chapter Four, can be illustrated here through an image provided by the same case from the hacienda of Tlachialoyan. When the ecclesiastical judge had to make a survey of the confiscated figurines, the following appeared among the others: "Tres angeles, otro dicho al parecer fraile [...], otra con una guitarra, otra como en acción de moler [...], dos conejos, un venado, tres sapos, dos culebras, una aguilá, un caballo".¹³³ Thus traditional representations of individuals, such as a woman in the act of grinding, and native animals, such as toads, snakes, and eagles, were accompanied by figurines of angels, friars and horses, a mixture of elements coming from two different worlds.

Finally, it is worth remembering that an aim of the thesis is to throw light on the phenomena considered through the particular perspective of linguistic analysis of the indigenous sources, when possible and appropriate. In fact, the kind of terms used constitutes an example of the process of reformulation itself, as terminology for funeral practices has illustrated: Nahuatl terms were used to describe new concepts, while Spanish words were employed only when the indigenous language could not provide a replacement. Moreover, the influence of Nahuatl has been seen also in Spanish documents, such as in the case of healing practices, when native terms were used within a Spanish discourse. Yet almost all of the special Nahuatl terminology appearing in the areas discussed in this chapter was used identically by women and by

¹³³ AHAM, Box 1754, "Causa seguida contra indios y indias de la hacienda de Buenavista".

men, unlike the evolving gender distinctions in kin terms which were a prominent feature of Chapter Four.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Indigenous women in Mexico in the centuries before independence have been studied far less than their counterparts in Hispanic society, and even when they have not been ignored as secondary, they have often been assigned a purely passive role. The multidimensional investigation presented in the present study reveals that Nahua women of the eighteenth-century Toluca Valley played a key role in the encounter between two worlds. Examination of a large number of specific cases of varying types has provided evidence of women's vital presence in Nahua society. Women were active, integrated into and participating in their communities throughout the Valley of Toluca. In many respects women shared the same social attributes as men; if there were some domains in which they were subordinate to men, there were others in which they predominated.

Women formed part of a multifaceted indigenous world that the Catholic Church had tried to penetrate and mould since the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century the Church was still exercising its pastoral power; sermons were preached in the Valley parishes, Christian doctrine was taught and sacraments were administered. In addition, archbishops took tours of inspection in the pueblos to verify the compliance with the Christian doctrine and examine the behaviour of the clergy (Chapter Two). The Church itself believed in its efficacy and in the strength of its proposed model of Christian life, but the extent to which pastoral power was really effective may be questioned on the basis of the patterns of indigenous behaviour that are discussed in Chapters Three to Five. Practical problems for the clergy in reaching the communities combined with difficulties of language communication and differences in cultural conceptions, and created a situation in which a superficial conformity disguised a more complex reality.

In addition to that, the Church in the Valley of Toluca lived a sort of internal contradiction. While the archbishops insisted on the image of the clergy as fathers and good shepherds for the natives, dedication and discipline were sometimes wanting

when applied to the daily routine of a parish priest. Inefficiency in the running of schools and the administration of sacraments, and abuses in collection of fees seemed to be a common feature of the local clergy's behaviour. This was not the primary reason why pastoral power was less effective than it might have been, but it is noteworthy because it helps provide a less idyllic portrait of Church's action in rural areas. Besides, this internal contradiction opens up another question, the need for more research on local clergy in general in the eighteenth century, along the lines of John Schwaller's study of sixteenth-century secular clergy, and of William Taylor's recent large-scale work on the clergy of the Bourbon period.¹ A dichotomy between the benevolent but unrealistic vision of the high clergy and the reality of parish life might be expected. However, further research would help to better situate local clergy in the everyday life of rural parishes; it might be that clergy were not just unscrupulous and irresponsible, as in the archbishops' reports, but followed the patterns of economic and social behaviour of Hispanic society as a whole.

The problems involved in the realisation of the model of Christian life for women lay mainly in the existence of a vital and quite autonomous indigenous society, which did not passively assimilate the cultural models proposed by Spanish authorities, but evolved in a distinct way. Indigenous reaction to Spanish influence has been shown here to combine women's resistance to and assimilation of Spanish cultural elements in their everyday lives. First of all, indigenous women have been considered at the most intimate level of their lives, the relationship with their husbands or partners (Chapter Three). Here the response to the model of Christian woman and marriage proposed by the Church was double-faceted. On one side, there was a general compliance with the model of Christian marriage in the sense that most women married and the sources reveal relatively few cases of polygamy and adultery. On the other side, illegitimate unions, or reactions against broken promises of marriage and mistreatment show women's unwillingness to accept the passive and subordinate position that Christian marriage envisaged for them. Instead they struggled to defend themselves, improve their position, and assure their sustenance. Another arena in

¹ John F. Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Taylor, *Magistrates*.

which indigenous women showed themselves not to be passive was when Spanish authorities attempted to intervene in their relationships and regularise them through marriage. Unmarried women in irregular unions showed the highest degree of defiance, if not in the number of cases in the sources, at least in the quality of the expressions they used to defend themselves. The words of Pascuala María and Margarita Bernal are among the clearest claims to women's autonomy in living their own lives. The fact that the two were involved in the cultivation of magueyes or sale of pulque provided them an economic independence that contributed greatly to their freedom from reliance on men. All the cases discussed at the level of relationships within the couple show women who did not follow the principle of obedience and submissiveness but struggled against their husbands and partners as well as against the interference of Spanish authorities in their lives. Most of these reactions went beyond the strict norm of Christian conduct, showing that the Church's model of Christian life and marriage was not totally accepted.

It is true that some aspects of Spanish influence penetrated into indigenous family life, for instance the concept of honour linked to a woman's purity and virginity, or the perception of marriage as primarily a relation between the couple, rather than involving the community; but the cases of reaction against Christian marriage show that the situation was open to discussion and not accepted passively. Moreover, the mere fact that only a few cases of adultery and polygamy have been found does not exclude the possibility that, far from being rare, the two phenomena were so common that they were reported to the authorities only when they provoked any scandal, being tolerated otherwise.

In discussing these matters it is worth considering whether the influence of the Christian model of marriage was due not only to the preaching of the clergy, but also to the contact that the natives had with Spanish society at large; in fact this contact showed its efficacy also in transmitting what the clergy considered the vices of Spanish society, such as illegitimacy. This point is discussed further below. Thus it can be said that pastoral power was not alone in its campaign to instil the Christian

model of woman and marriage in indigenous communities, but it had an important partner, voluntary or not, in Spanish society in general.

Expanding the scope of observation to relationships within the household, what emerges again is the penetration of Spanish cultural elements in the context of lively indigenous practices and conceptions (Chapter Four). The information available on family relationships leads one to conclude that connections among a broader group of relatives were still significant in the eighteenth century as they were in early colonial times, and presumably even before. Although the model of Christian marriage based on the nuclear family was common among Indians at that time, the analysis of bequests made clear that a couple counted on a network of relatively extended family links.

Some Spanish elements penetrated at a deeper level, such as the relationship between the couple in terms of gender perception. At an earlier stage, Nahuatl terms did not make any gendered distinction between the couple; however, the study of terminology has shown how, by the eighteenth century, the Nahuas adopted different terms for husband and wife, moving towards the Spanish fashion of distinguishing genders, even if the terms were not in Spanish, but evolved from indigenous terminology. Overall, the terminology used to designate individuals in eighteenth-century Toluca showed an increased tendency to indicate gender in the same fashion as Spanish. For the most part it had parallel categories for females and males, but in some cases a general, originally non-gendered term was appropriated for the male alone, a gendered term being developed for the female. The tendency corresponds to Spanish patterns to an extent, but it also seems to have roots in Nahua culture. Spanish influence is visible also in terms of naming patterns, since the natives adopted Spanish-type names and titles; however, they never took on the Spanish practice of identifying a lineage or family through a surname, their names being for the most part used only to identify individuals. In general then, it can be said that some Spanish terms became part of indigenous society, but to the extent possible there was a reformulation of the elements themselves, which is shown by the tendency to translate Spanish concepts into Nahuatl terms whenever it was possible.

Something similar happened with the physical structure of the household as well. The Spanish-influenced oratory was common in many indigenous houses by the eighteenth century. However, the whole complex of the household maintained its ancient structure in terms of orientation of the buildings according to the movement of the sun, or landed property linked to the household itself. In general, the whole dimension of the household shows a great similarity of behaviour for both genders, and a strong continuity of the elements that compose the household complex from early colonial times and presumably before.

The same conclusion is reached through the analysis of patterns of possession and bequests. Both genders could possess and bequeath houses and lands, with no restriction for women; however, as far as inheriting them, it has been noted that daughters suffered some disadvantages compared to their brothers. Yet there were some exceptions, usually represented by strong female testators who decided to pass on to their daughters some possession that they had inherited from their mothers. As for other kinds of property, only a few household objects were mentioned in the wills, and they seem to have been left equally to both daughters and sons. The situation was quite different with animals, since their ownership was more frequent among men in general, and they were bequeathed according to gender distinction; in fact, while oxen and horses were usually given to males, sheep and cows went to females.

Finally, the broader sphere of connections between the household and the outside world has been analysed in terms of practices and activities that took place in the community's eye, and through which indigenous women opened up the household space (Chapter Five). Funeral practices and the cult of Catholic saints show a fuller and more obvious penetration of Church influence compared to other arenas. A mass to be said for the soul was virtually universal, and indigenous people often requested to be shrouded in a Franciscan habit and buried close to Christian images, having the bells rung for them, thus making the parish church and cemetery the focus of the attention. Also, the image of the Virgin Mary became the most popular among the natives. But here again the result of this assimilation suggests that it was not simple

adoption of new concepts under the pressure of external influence, rather it was elaboration of new elements to be inserted into already-acquired knowledge. This is clear with the cult of saints; although images of Catholic saints were present in every indigenous household, it is noteworthy that they were worshipped together with ancient gods, and through ancient practices such as the use of copal incense and sweeping. In general, ritual practices related to death were very similar for women and men, occasionally with more elaborate formulas and rites for the latter. On the other hand, gender-based differences are evident in the cult of saints; for men it was more common to possess sacred images, and their holdings were larger and more varied compared to women. On their side, women seemed to develop a special devotion for Nuestra Señora of Guadalupe, since representations of her were more commonly found in their possession.

Healing practices as well show a great deal of continuity with the past; moreover, the active role that women played, travelling to other pueblos to cure the sick or to contact a *curandera*, suggests another pattern of non-compliance with the model of a passive and dependent woman. Similarly in the cultivation of maguey and the production of beverages women entered the public domain opening their houses or going to other pueblos to sell pulque and *tepache*; moreover, this seems to be a gender-based activity, since the persons usually involved were women. So many extensions from the household into the broader world, together with intrusion of the broader world into the household, greatly complicate the traditional simple distinction between private or domestic space and public space.

General Remarks

In the end, the research carried out here has confirmed that the extent of resistance to and assimilation of Spanish cultural features displayed by Nahua women is a process operating between two poles; at one end it involved conscious resistance and at the other apparently full assimilation, but with much unconscious, independent evolution and partial convergence in between. Often Spanish cultural elements are adapted in

such a way that they can be inserted into an indigenous perception of the world. As far as the other original aim of the dissertation is concerned, determining the effectiveness of pastoral power, it can be said that the Church's intervention and projects were not wholly successful, at least not in the simplistic and unquestioned fashion in which they have been often portrayed. In addition to the Church's internal contradiction, pastoral power faced difficulties in dealing with a complex indigenous society and its reactions. In the past, Church goals and pronouncements have often been too readily taken for actual achievements. The thesis has attempted to apply a more two-dimensional type of research, which in the present case has shown substantial compliance with Church norms as well as significant deviance from them.

In fact, in the present context it has become clear that there are more than two dimensions affecting these processes and requiring attention. The research has identified another source of evolution that is relatively independent from the Church, the development of Nahua culture across time on its own terms. With many features basic to the research on eighteenth-century Toluca, such as kinship terminology, naming patterns, inheritance, funeral practices and so on, the question arises of whether they were a new development or a continuation of earlier practices. Both scholarly studies and published documents from the late sixteenth century, particularly the Testaments of Culhuacan, have been used to obtain a temporal perspective, and both continuities and changes were found. It seems that the Nahuas were acting and reacting as much within their own culture as in relation to Church models and actions. Furthermore, it became evident that many religious practices of eighteenth-century Toluca derived from the Church campaign of the sixteenth century; such elements can be considered as part of the existing Nahua culture for the time here studied.

An additional dimension whose relevance has become evident through the thesis is the influence of Spanish civil society in general, through the ordinary and unplanned contact of indigenous and Hispanic people, as already mentioned above. Such a possibility is strongly suggested, for example, by the fact that indigenous and Hispanic people deviated in a rather similar fashion from Church models of relations between women and men. Also, the Spanish terminology and concepts that were appearing in

the household and land regime in the indigenous world of the Toluca Valley suggest an influence coming from contact with Hispanic society at large. Connections and interactions between natives and Spaniards in an urban setting, particularly in Mexico City, have been quite extensively studied.² On the other hand, research on contacts between indigenous and Hispanic people in a rural environment is much needed, although it may prove difficult. There are some indications that the Nahuas considered connections with Spaniards to be desirable, as indicated in the fact that some of the highest ranking testators use Spaniards as witnesses, or that a male testator had a Spanish *comadre* and wanted her to take care of the funeral rather than his own still living wife. It seems that racial mixture played an important part in the rapprochement of the two populations, but there is no specific mention of it in the records. No one is called mestizo in the testaments, nor are mestizos indicated in contemporary censuses of the area; however, it is clear that many people who were biologically mestizos were referred to as Spaniards. With the present tools it seems impossible to determine whether any of the indigenous people involved in testaments or litigation were biologically mixed. It may be that in certain cases where Spanish naming patterns and connections were used consistently (such as the case of María Ana de Morales), racial as well as cultural mixture took place.³

Methodology

The use of a combination of sources in Spanish and in Nahuatl has proved to be extremely fruitful in the reconstruction of the indigenous world of the Toluca Valley and the intervention of the Church within it. While testaments in Nahuatl tend to give information about normal patterns of everyday life, litigation in Spanish provides details on problems, tensions, or emergencies that originate in and go beyond the

² An example is Pescador, *Bautisados*, *passim*.

³ In her *Postconquest Coyoacan*, Rebecca Horn has studied two quite separate bodies of documentation, one in Nahuatl, concerning primarily indigenous people, and another in Spanish, concerning primarily the local Spanish community. She has looked closely for evidence of contact between the two ethnic groups. In this way she is able to show how local Spanish residents and the gradual evolution of their community affected indigenous life and became intertwined with it. See Rebecca Horn, *Postconquest Coyoacan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), especially pp. 227-35.

normal patterns. In a very different but complementary way, official sources in Spanish (such as reports of inspections and *Libros de gobierno*) are used to situate the patterns of indigenous everyday life in the context of the policies adopted by the Church in the period under study.

With documents in a relatively unfamiliar language such as Nahuatl, a philological approach becomes necessary; specific expressions of the language disclose aspects of the culture and its evolution. Meaningful distinctions of gendered inheritance have been discovered between the categories *tlalli* and *milli*, both often appearing in Spanish translations simply as land. An important trend toward change in the use of gender in Nahuatl kinship expressions can only be seen by examining original Nahuatl terms. In working with testaments, in order to obtain a broader overview of factual matters such as numbers of people, gender, property, saints, masses and burials, the relevant data were compiled for the whole corpus. A particular contribution of this thesis is that it has used Nahuatl words and phrases to define the culture and structure of the household and the extent to which various Spanish and Christian elements have been integrated.⁴ The possibility lies open to apply this kind of approach also to sources in Spanish, especially mundane documents such as testaments by rural Hispanic families.

Another important methodological feature of this study is the decision to include both women and men in the analysis. This procedure is particularly evident in the case of Nahuatl testaments, but has been used also with litigation to the extent possible, such as in the cases of broken promises of marriage or mistreatment, where relevant details on men have been discussed. That is, here women have never been considered isolated from the context of their relationships with men, rather they have been studied in a dialectical perspective with the other sex. This approach grew directly out of the materials examined, but it parallels the more general evolution of women's history in

⁴ The thesis has shown how fruitful the analysis of indigenous documents can be, favouring an approach to this kind of sources that has long been disregarded, especially by European scholars. Other paths are open as well in terms of the documentation produced by natives, such as community maps, as indicated by Barbara E. Mundy in her study, *The Mapping of New Spain. Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

the direction of gender history, as explained by Joan W. Scott.⁵ The development of women's history in the 1970s was necessary in terms of establishing a separate identity for women within a mainstream history dominated by men. However, the field needed to evolve further by integrating women into history, and this has been possible through emphasis on the category of gender, starting from the 1980s, a category of analysis that stresses the importance of the relations between the two sexes; women cannot be defined unless in relation to men, and vice versa. Within the mainstream of scholarship on gender, some studies have applied a methodology similar to the present thesis in other contexts, showing how fruitful this approach can be. An example is Catherine H. Komisaruk's doctoral dissertation on gender, ethnic and social relations in Guatemala City in late colonial and early national times. In her study of economic activities carried out by Africans and Indians in the urban setting, Komisaruk combines an analysis of both women's and men's roles and discovers patterns of behaviour that apply to both genders. Of course, her dissertation focuses on an urban rather than a rural area, and the notarial and court records that have been used do not include sources in indigenous languages.⁶

Future Research

The present research has been undertaken using a substantial but necessarily finite corpus of records, concentrating on a particular fifty-year span in the late colonial period. In the course of research it has become apparent that the most comparable existing works of scholarship deal with the period before 1650, and that it would be very desirable to expand the temporal dimensions of the present work, employing a larger corpus of documents. The author in fact has concrete plans for moving in this direction in the near future. The chronological dimension would be broadened to

⁵ Joan W. Scott, "Women's History", in *New Perspectives*, pp. 43-70. For a reconstruction of the debate over tendencies in women's history, see also the article of Sueann Caulfield, "The History of Gender in the Historiography of Latin America", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 81(3-4) (2001), pp. 449-56.

⁶ Catherine H. Komisaruk, "Women and Men in Guatemala, 1765-1835: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Relations in the Central American Capital" (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 2000). A similar approach can be seen, with use of indigenous-language documents, in Lisa Sousa, "Women in Native Societies and Cultures of Colonial Mexico" (PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 1998).

include the time from mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, for which a large corpus of both Nahuatl testaments and Spanish litigation from the Toluca region is known to exist. Within this framework, the patterns of everyday life in indigenous communities of the Toluca Valley could be observed over a longer span; continuities could be better established, and trends of change could be more easily detected and chronologically defined. Moreover, a broader corpus of documents would allow the inclusion of additional details of indigenous daily life that have not been touched on here, as well as reaching more definite conclusions on some aspects that have remained obscure, for instance the link between images of saints and lands, or female economic activities. Considering a more extended body of documents would also permit testing the patterns of terminology discovered here.

An additional step would be to expand the comparative approach, virtually limited here to comparisons between early eighteenth-century Toluca documents and the late sixteenth-century Testaments of Culhuacan, to other available printed sources. Thus it would be possible to establish the extent to which the patterns seen in the Toluca Valley in the late period are similar to or different from those of other time periods and areas, beginning the process of achieving a country-wide perspective over the entire three centuries or more after the arrival of the Spaniards.⁷ The body of published documentation and ethnohistorical research on Mexico has grown to impressive proportions, but to date most comparison in this corpus has been fragmentary and unsystematic.

Beyond the author's own specific future research plans related to the present project, some more general imperatives emerge. One lesson of the present study is that it is a fruitful approach not to separate Church history or more broadly speaking institutional history from social and cultural history, considering them as distinct branches, but to combine them whenever possible, so that both the connections and the disjunctions can readily be seen. Another need that has emerged from the present project is for close social investigation of rural Hispanic families, which apparently exercised a

⁷ Particularly, the following collections can be considered: Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart, *Beyond the Codices*; Karttunen and Lockhart, *Nahuatl in the Middle Years*; Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*; Rojas, *Vidas y bienes olvidados*.

crucial influence on the indigenous world, and were themselves doubtless strongly influenced. Finally, the need for chronological perspective has already been stressed. The sources and studies available for comparison with late-period Toluca deal overwhelmingly with the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century (Stage 2). Sources for the conquest generation (Stage 1) are few, and though there seem to be abundant sources for preconquest life, they are posterior, filtered in various ways, and not comparable in reliability or specificity with sources mentioning actual events and individuals, such as are used here and in much recent ethnohistorical scholarship. How to detect older as opposed to newer patterns under these conditions is a problem which will demand a great deal of attention in the future.

Underlying the present research project, with its multidimensional approach in studying the colonial indigenous world, is the belief in the necessity of further research on indigenous women in the middle to late colonial period, especially in rural areas. The advance of scholarship in women-related issues in Latin American history has in fact shown a proliferation of interests and topics over the past two decades; however, it seems that the indigenous women of Mexico have attracted very little attention, being confined to some studies of their roles and lives in early colonial times, and research on them at the end of the eighteenth century and the national period, when proletarianisation and other factors greatly overshadowed ethnicity in urban centres.⁸ On the other hand, studies on Hispanic and especially elite women abound, surely in part due to the fact that sources are more easily available. Being conscious of the importance of crossing ethnic borders in studying women's lives and patterns of behaviour, I still believe that indigenous women in rural areas in the late colonial period preserve a significant distinctiveness that is worth specific consideration in the formation of future research projects.

⁸ For a review of the development of scholarship in the field, see the article of Caulfield, "History of Gender", pp. 449-56.

Appendix: Selected Testaments in Nahuatl

The appendix includes four testaments used in the research, three of women and one of a man, transcribed and translated, with some analysis of each, so that the reader can get a further grasp of the methodology used. The four wills illustrate different points that have already been discussed in Chapters Four and Five. Some of these matters are succinctly repeated here, partly to show the connections between the documents. In fact, the four testaments come from the same family cluster, and those of the women were found in the AHAM in a lawsuit on inheritance brought by Polonia Antonia, the woman who appears in Document 2, María Hernández's will. Polonia Antonia was the widow of Santiago Martín, son of María Hernández, her mother-in-law, and she was the mother of the two children mentioned by María Hernández in her will, Juan Estacio y Rafael Antonio. In a dispute over property she presented to the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca the testament of her mother-in-law and of María Hernández's mother, Elena de la Cruz (Document 1, which has been reproduced below from a picture of the original). At the time of the lawsuit Polonia Antonia had married again to Salvador Francisco de Castro Moctezuma, the brother of María Josefa (Document 3), who started the litigation that involved her testament; from the dossier we learn that Juan Crisóstomo was María Josefa's legitimate child, while Antonio was illegitimate (a fact also referred to in the testament). Finally, Adrián Josef (Document 4) was María Josefa's husband, and his testament was found separately.

The transcriptions follow the original faithfully in representing all the letters in it, only introducing a spacing based on modern grammatical norms. The reproduction of original abbreviations, superscripts, and overbars was impossible for technical reasons, so that the signs have been resolved into full alphabetical forms, using brackets for what is inserted. The translations are made directly from the Nahuatl, but accompanying contemporary Spanish translations were often helpful, though using a different terminology and sometimes in error, and they are referred to several times in the notes. No contemporary Spanish translation was available for Document 4.

Document 1: Testamento de Elena de la Cruz, 1711

Ma moçenquizCayectenehua yn itlaçomahuiztocatzin yn dios tetatzin yhuan dios tepiltzin yhuan dios espiritu santo ma y muchihua Amen Jesus = Axca miercolez A 19 de Agosto de 1711 Años nicpehualtia y notestamento y nehuatl notoca elena de la cruz notlaxilacalpa s[a]n mig[ue]l haticpac Ca niquitohua yntla ninomiquilis Ca huel acachtapa y noyolia y nanimantzin Ca huel yçenmactzinco nocontlalia y notlaçotatzin dios = yhuan niquitohua Ca oncatqui ynic quimiliuhtiaz y notlalnacayo yhuan yc ninolpitzin yn icordontzin y notlaçotatzin San fran[cis]co = yhuan noseputura yez Ca onpa huey teopa tercera orden oncan toctiez y notlalnacayo yntla yntla tlen nopa quimochihuilitzinos y notlaçotatzin dios = yhuan niquitohua motemacaz meliotzin Santa Jerusalem = yhuan niquitohua yehuatzin Santissimo onicnomaquili çe palio damasco chichiltic yhuan çe gio¹ yca cruz dorado yhuan oc çe palio nicnomaquilia çe palio yhuan çe frontal chichiltic damasco yntla oc nechmonemiltis dios = yhuan çe costorio onictemacac ypatih chiquaçenpohuali yhuan matlactli peso = yhuan niquitohua yehuatzin San mig[ue]l onpa moyetzitacqui ycpac Costorio Ca niquincauhtih omenti nochpochhuan çe ytoca m[ari]a ernandez yhuan Rosa m[ari]a quimomaquilisque xochitl Candela yhuan sanno yehuatzin Santissimo onicnomaquili çe ornamento ystac yhuan çe chichiltic yhuan çe ornamento ystac damasco CaSula yhuan armati oc çe ornamento morado no yCa CaSulla yCa armatica yhuan çe frontal chichiltic = yhuan yehuatzin San fran[cis]co moyetzitica ycpac coratelar altar mayor onictemacac 10 p[es]os yhuan San mig[ue]l Caxtilteca no 10 p[es]os = yhuan San nicolaz Caxtilteca no 10 p[es]os = yhuan yehuatzin S[an]ta m[ari]a la Redonda yquac ohuالمohuicac onictemacac 20 p[es]os = yhuan notlaçotatzin San Anthonio onicmaquili 15 p[es]os = yhuan yehuatzin la Virgen de Rosario onicnomaquili 10 p[es]os yquac omochichiuhtzino ychantzin = yhuan oc çenpantli metepitzitzin nicnomaquilia = yhuan san nicolaz maçehualti onicnomaquili 4 p[es]os = yhuan ypan ylhuitzin mochihuaz çe miSa ReSada yhuan quimomaquilisque çe libra Candela ayc polihuiz yhuan yquac motlalhuiquixtilis media libra candela quimomaquilisque nopilhuan onca Canpa quiSaz

¹ For *guión*.

yhuan yehuatzin Santo christo² Caluario onictemacac 10 p[es]os yquac omouhpahui [?] ychantzin yhuan yc omorodaro³ coRatelar no 10 p[es]os onictemac [sic] yhuan onicnomaquili çe frontal morado damasco yhuan ome CaSullas çe morado yhuan çe ystac = yhua çe estaçio onicchiuh onpa Caltenpa ayc quicahuazque nopilhuan quimocuitlahuitzinosque ypan quarezma yhuan ypan espiritu pasqua yhuan ypan domingo de Ramos melio quitemacazque nopilhuan yhuan ypan viernes Santo yohuatzinco yhuan teotlac memelio quitemacazque yhuan terçera orde Santo christo yn iquac motlayahualhuiz no melio motemacaz = yhuan yehuatzin Santo christo bera crus nicnomaquilia 1 p[es]os yc mochichihuaz ychantzin = yhuan ytoca Alejo lopi nechhuiquilia 4 p[es]os yntla oquixtlauih motemacas carmetzin = yhuan niquitohua yehuatzin San mig[ue]l de apariçio nicnonemactilia çe pedaso tlali oniccouh onpa moquetzas ychantzin yntla oc dios nechmochicahuilis yntla oninomiquili oncan cate omentin nopilhuan çihuatzitzinti m[ari]a ernandes yhuan Rosa m[ari]a yhuan macuiltin oquichtin çe ytoca Gabriel de la crus yhuan Santiago de la crus yhuan Jusep Ramos yhuan Felipe Cabrera yhuan tomas xuarez mochtin tlapalehuizque yhuan oncatqui ome caltzintli yzticac yquisayanpa tonatiuh çe ychantzinco dios çe coçina onpa quilhuia xacalco oniccouh ypatiu chiquaçenpohuali yhuan matlactli peso muchi y Callali yCa metl nicnoCahuililia yehuatzin San mig[ue]l de apariçio onpa quisaz yc mochantitzinos = yhuan oncatqui oc çe tlaltzintli Sanno onpa Caltenpa oniccohuili marcos manael yhuan yçihuahuatzin ytoca ysabel Anthonia muchi nicnocahuililia San mig[uel] apariçio yhuan noermanotzin pe[d]ro domingo quimopielilia 12 p[es]os yhuan ymamaltzin yehuatzin pe[d]ro domigo quimotemaquilis bigaz yaxcatzin san mig[ue]l apar[içio] yhuan oc çecni 10 p[es]os ypanpa escritura muchi yaxcatzin San mig[ue]l de apariçio yhuan yehuatz[...] donya mag[dale]na ernandez nechhuiquilia 25 p[es]os no yaxcatzin San mig[ue]l apariçio = yhuan yehuatz[...] marcos manael quitechuiquilia 20 p[es]os 4 ts no yaxcatzin San mig[ue]l apariçio = yhuan yehuatzin[...] [...]huepoltzin⁴ don gaspar de los Reyez

² 'Christo' is actually written 'xpo' with an overbar, here and in other instances in the document.

³ The normal form would be 'omodoraro', from the Spanish verb *dorar*.

⁴ As discussed in Chapter Four, the Nahuatl term *-huepol* for brother-in-law of a female had generally been replaced by the Spanish term *cuñado* in eighteenth-century Toluca Valley; here is the only exception of the whole corpus of testaments.

Calixtlahuacan namiquetica quitehuiquilia 10 p[es]os no yaxc[a] San mig[ue]l = yhuan
ytoca fran[cis]co yçihuahuatzin onpa Calixtlahuaca quitehuiquilia 1 p[es]os = yhuan
[...]nardino bernardo 1 p[es]os quitehuiquilia = yhuan Juan matheo 1 p[es]os = yhuan
donya Jusepha Fran[cis]ca 5 p[es]os = yhuan yehuatzin Go[berna]dor don Juan de Stiago
quimotehuiquililia 4 p[es]os yntla omoxtlauh yca[?] çe frontal onicnonemactili Santisimo
= yhuan notelpoch Gabriel de la cruZ quitehuiquilia 3 p[...] yaxcatzin San mig[ue]l
aparicio = yhuan yehuatzin san mig[ue]l tlaxilacali otictocohuilique çe fronta[...]
chichiltic yhuan çe caSulla chichiltic yhuan onicnouhpahuili yehuatzin San mig[ue]l yCa
12 [...] teocuitlatl yhuan pintor onicmacac 20 p[es]os = yhuan yCapotitzin San nicolaz
otictocohuilique oticoncahuique noermanatzin m[ari]a yCa 20 p[es]os 4 ts = yhuan
niquitohua yn ipalehuilo[ca] yez nanimantzin Ca oncatqui centetl miSa Cantada Reque =
yhuan yçihuahuatzin Gabr[...]el de la cruz ytoca pe[tro]na m[ari]a ye onicmacac 14
p[es]os 4 rr yhuan yey boritus onicmacac yhu[an] ome metl tlatetzauhctli onicmacac
yhuan nahui pitzome yhuan çe metlatl yhuan çe yonta hu[...]caxti muchi yCa
ynechichihual yhuan çetzin La Virgen de guadalope nicnomaquilia yhua[n] çe tlalmili
niccahuilia macuipohuali yhuan caxtoli yhuan çe bara yc huiyac yhua yc patlahuac quipie
chicuepohuali bara yhuan onpantli metotonti nicmac [sic] muchi yCa tlali onca atlahco =
yhuan niquitohua Santiago de la cruz nicmaca çe tlaltontli onpa onca xomet[]tla
notlacohual onca escritura yhuan onpantli metl no Yca tlali Sanno onpa atlahco yhuan [?]
metlatl yhuan 5 p[es]os onicmacac yhuan onca oc ce tlali ynahuac ychan nicolaz pasqual
n[...]catzintli yCaltenpa ynon cosina ysquina muchi nicmaca yhuan çe huacax onicmacac
yhuan çe escaRama yhuan çetzin Guadalope quimotequipanilhuiz = yhuan nochpoch
y[...]ca M[ari]a ernandez nicmaca ce tlali Canpa omochanti quipie onpohuali yhuan ome
bar[...] yc huiyac yhuan yc patlahuac onpohuali yhuan macuili bara yhuan çe huacax
yhuan çe escarama yhuan matlactli metotonti = yhuan ytoca felipe Cabrera nicmaca
tepitzin tlali ysquina CoRal asta otli ca tlantica yhuan asta tlapac ynahuac tetl melauhca
ermita onicp[...]tli ynon Cali ayac aquin tlen quilhuiz yhuan çe huacax yCa escaRama
yhuan çe metlatl yhuan çe San Anthonio yhuan çe la Virgen de la conSep[ci]o[n] yhuan 5
p[es]os nicmaca yc mochantis yhu[...] çe tlalmilli onca otli ychan molina tlaco yaxca
yhuan oc tlaco nicmaca Jusep Ramos yhuan ç[...] metlatl yhuan onca ce tlaltzintli

yCaltenpa mathiaz ernandez quipie çenpohualquahuïtl yhuiyac yhuan yc patlahuac matlacquahuïtl nicmaca tlaco Jusep Ramos onpa mochantis yhuan nicmaca 5 p[es]os yhuan çe huacax onicmacac yhuan çe escaRama yhuan yehuatzin la V[...]ge de los Remedio quimotequipanilhuiz yhuan onpantli metl yCa tlali onpa atlahco yhu[...] felipe onpantli metl no yCa tlali = yhuan ytoca Rosa m[ari]a nicmaca caltzingtli ytzticac yc [...]te ychantzincos dios oc çe ytzticac yc Sur yca coRal Campa motocaz xochitl yhuicalo tlali yhuan ynon coRal Canpa cochi yolcatzitzinti çemicac San youhqui mocahuaz para mochtin ermanos [y]motlapielisque yhuan çe tlaCatlantli onca onpa San Ber[nardi]no ynahuac Beronica nicmaca Rosa m[...] yhuan onca oc ce tlali onca yCaltenpa nicolaz pasqual micatzintli niccahuilia Rosa m[ari]a yhu[...] onca oc çe tlatzintli onca yc otli tzinacantepec quipie çenpohualquahuïtl yc huiyac San yahualiuhtica muchi nicmaca Rosa m[ari]a yhuan onpatli metl muchi yCa tlali onpa atlahco[...] yhuan niquitohua tomas Jusep niccahuilia ynin caltzingtli ome ytzticac ycalaquianpa tonatiuh çe ychantzincos dios oc ce ysticac yquiSayanpa tonatiuh oc ce ytzticac norte yca yolac⁵ yhuicalo tlatzintli yca metepitzitzin nican quimotequipanilhuiz dios quimocuitlahuiz caltzingtli yhua[...] çe tlatzintli onca nican caltenpa oniccouh yca 10 p[eso]s muchi onicmaca yhuan çe huacax yhu[...] çe caxa yhuan çe escarama yhuan çe metlatl yhuan onpantli metl onca onpa atlahco = yhuan san [f. 2] yhuan san [sic] mig[ue]l apariçio nicnomaquilia onpantli metl nican onca tlacpac = yhuan manôel Anthonio nicmaca ynon tlaltontli campâ oquitocac ymetoton san quetiâmi⁶ sentecpantli yhuan san Juan de dios nicnomaquilia yey metl tepitoton yhuan santo christo bera cruz nicnomaquilia yey metl tepitoton yhuân Animas Caxtilteca nicnomaquilia çe metl tepiton = yhuan Santo christo sangre de christo nicnomaquilia ome metl tepitoton = yhuan san nicolas caxtilteca çe metl tepiton yhuan merçedez çe metl tepiton yhuan San Anthonio yey metl tepitoton yhuan Animas ce metl San nicolaz ome metl yhuan la Virgen de los dolores çe metl = yhuan niquitohua nopanpa tziliniz tepoztli San mig[ue]l yhuan santa Barbara yhuan San Ber[nardi]no yhuan caluario

⁵ The spelling of this word is dubious. It may be a form of *yolcatl*, equine or bovine animal, especially since the Spanish translation has “corral” at this point.

⁶ The spelling of this word is not certain. I have not identified it and have not translated it; neither did the Spanish translator.

motemacaz huentzintli memeliotzitzin neltiz notlanequiliz = yhuan niquitohua Ca huel
 cenca niquinnotlatlauhtilia omentin nochpochuan m[ari]a hernandez yhuan Rosa m[ari]a
 yehuanti noalbaSea yezque yntla quali quimochihuilizque Ca dios quinmotlaxtlahuiliz =
 yhuan onotzaloque yn imixpan onicchiuh y noteztamento teztigos don mathiaz de la cruz
 Go[berna]dor teniente testigo Ber[nardi]no Bernardo testigo diego pasqual testigo
 pe[d]ro domigo es[scriba]no thomas de la cruz

May the precious revered name of God the father, God the child, and God the Holy Spirit be entirely praised. May this be done, amen.⁷ Jesus. = Today Wednesday the 19th of August of the year 1711 I begin my testament, I named Elena de la Cruz, of the *tlaxilacalli* of San Miguel Aticpac. I say that if I die, the very first of all I place my spirit and soul very completely in the hands of my precious father God. = And I say that I have the means with which my earthly body will be shrouded, and I am to be girt with the rope of my precious father San Francisco. = And my grave is to be at the great church, at the [chapel of]⁸ the Tercera Orden; there my earthly body is to lie buried if my precious father God brings something upon me. = And I say that half a real is to be given for Holy Jerusalem. = And I say that I gave to the most holy Sacrament a canopy of crimson damask and an ensign with a gilded cross, and I am giving it another canopy, and an altar hanging of crimson damask, if God allows me to live for a while longer. = And I provided a monstrance costing 130 pesos. = And as to the San Miguel that is on top of the monstrance, I am leaving behind two daughters of mine, one named María Hernández and [the other] Rosa María. They are to provide it with flowers and candles. And I also gave to the most holy Sacrament a white ornament⁹, a crimson one, and an ornament of white damask, a chasuble [with a coat of arms ?]; another purple ornament, also with a chasuble [with a coat of arms], and a crimson altar hanging. = And I gave 10 pesos for the San Francisco on top of the side altar at the main altar, and for the San Miguel of the Spaniards also 10 pesos. = And for San Nicolás of the Spaniards also 10 pesos. = and for Santa

⁷ "May this be done" also means amen.

⁸ The Spanish translation adds the word "capilla" here.

⁹ Apparently in reference to cloth for hanging or a garment.

María la Redonda when she came I gave 20 pesos. = And to my precious father San Antonio I gave 15 pesos. = And to the Virgin of Rosario I gave 10 pesos when her home [chapel] was fixed up. = And I am also giving her a row of small magueyes. = And to San Nicolás of the indigenous people¹⁰ I gave 4 pesos. = And on his feast day a low mass is to be performed, and they are to give him a pound of candles, which are never to be lacking, and when he has a feast day my children are to give him half a pound of candles; it is from them that the money is to come.¹¹ And I gave 10 pesos for Santo Cristo del Calvario when his home [chapel] was cleaned¹², and for gilding the side altar I also gave 10 pesos. And I gave him an altar hanging of purple damask and two chasubles, one purple and one white. - And I set up a station of the cross¹³ at the entry [to my home]; my children are never to abandon it; they are to take care of it; at Lent and the feast of the Holy Spirit, and Palm Sunday, my children are to provide half a real, and they are to provide half a real in the morning and in the afternoon on Good Friday, and also when the Santo Cristo of the Tercera Orden goes in procession, they are to provide half a real. = And to the Santo Cristo de la Vera Cruz I give a peso for his home [chapel] to be fixed up. = And a person named Alejo López owes me 4 pesos; when he has paid it, it is to be given to Carmen. = And I say that I donate to San Miguel de Aparicio a piece of land that I bought; there his home [chapel] is to be erected if God still gives me health. When I have died, there are my two female children, María Hernández and Rosa María, and five males, one named Gabriel de la Cruz, and Santiago de la Cruz, Josef Ramos, Felipe Cabrera, and Tomás Juárez; they are all to help. And there are two houses facing east, one the home of God and one a kitchen [and what they call a hut];¹⁴ I bought it for 130 pesos including the house-land with magueyes. I leave it to San Miguel de Aparicio; from there is to come the means to build his home. = And there is another piece of land also outside the house that I

¹⁰ Literally commoners, people, a standard expression in Nahuatl after about 1600.

¹¹ The two parts of this statement seem contradictory, but perhaps the meaning is that the pound of candles will come from Elena de la Cruz's assets and the half pound from the children.

¹² Despite the unusual orthography, the verb is apparently *chipahua*, to clean. The Spanish translation speaks of the chapel being renewed, and indeed in this context a meaning broader than cleaning is most likely.

¹³ The Spanish translation has "capilla de las estaciones".

¹⁴ It may also be that the kitchen is called 'a hut'.

bought from Marcos Manuel and his wife named Isabel Antonia; I leave it all to San Miguel de Aparicio. And my brother Pedro Domingo has 12 pesos, [as a result of which] he is charged with providing beams belonging to San Miguel Aparicio. And another 10 pesos on account of a notarial document¹⁵, all of it belongs to San Miguel Aparicio. And doña Magdalena Hernández owes me 25 pesos, which also belongs to San Miguel Aparicio. = And Marcos Manuel owes 20 pesos and 4 reales, which also belongs to San Miguel Aparicio. = And [her?]¹⁶ brother-in-law don Gaspar de los Reyes, who is married in Calixtlahuaca, owes 10 pesos, which also belongs to San Miguel. = And the wife of a person named Francisco at Calixtlahuaca owes 1 peso. = And Bernardino Bernardo owes 1 peso. = And Juan Mateo 1 peso. = and doña Josefa 5 pesos. = and the governor don Juan de Santiago owes 4 pesos; when it is paid [it is to go toward] an altar hanging that I donated to the most holy Sacrament. = And my son Gabriel de la Cruz owes 3 pesos, which belongs to San Miguel Aparicio. And we bought for the San Miguel of the *tlaxilacalli*¹⁷ a crimson altar hanging and a crimson chasuble, and I had San Miguel cleaned up [or renewed] with 12 [ounces of?]¹⁸ gold, and I gave 20 pesos to the painter.¹⁹ = And we bought a cloak for San Nicolás, my sister María and I did it together, for 20 pesos and 4 reales. = And I say that for the help of my soul there is a high mass of requiem. And to the wife of Gabriel de la Cruz named Petrona María I gave 14 pesos and 4 reales, and I gave her three little donkeys, and two *magueyes capones*,²⁰ and 4 pigs, and a metate, and a yoke of oxen²¹ with all their tackle, and I give her a Virgen de Guadalupe, and I leave her a field 116 varas long and 160 varas wide²², and I give her two rows of

¹⁵ Presumably the brother owes this too.

¹⁶ The possessive prefix is missing in the photocopy of the original; the Spanish translation has “su”, ‘her’.

¹⁷ Or conceivably: “we of the *tlaxilacalli* bought for San Miguel”; since *tlaxilacalli* is in the third person, however, the interpretation in the text above is more likely. The Spanish translation is: “el señor San Miguel del Barrio le compramos”. The ‘we’ is perhaps Elena and her sister as below.

¹⁸ The Spanish translation has “libras de”, which seems impossible.

¹⁹ The Spanish translation calls the painter a “dorador”.

²⁰ The form “*tlatetzauhctli*” in the Nahuatl seems to correspond to standard *tlatetzauhtli*, from *tentzaqua*, to block the mouth or aperture of something. The more technical meaning is not yet apparent; the Spanish word refers to things that have been castrated or cut.

²¹ Throughout the document the word ‘huacax’, which derives from Spanish *vaca(s)* and usually indeed meant cow, must be taken as referring to an ox, and the Spanish translation so renders it.

²² Several times through this document the lesser measurement is called the length, the larger the width.

little magueyes along with their land at the ravine. = And I say that to Santiago de la Cruz I give a little piece of land at Xometitlan, that I purchased, and there is a notarial document [to prove it], and two rows of magueyes also with the land they're on, likewise at the ravine, and a metate, and I gave him 5 pesos, and as to another piece of land next to the home of Nicolás Pascual, deceased, outside the kitchen, at the corner, I give it all to him. And I gave him an ox with an *escaramán*,²³ and a Guadalupe that he is to serve. = And to my daughter named María Hernández I give a piece of land where she made her home, that measures 42 varas long and 45 varas wide, and an ox with an *escaramán*, and 10 little magueyes. = And to the one named Felipe Cabrera I give a bit of land at the corner of the corral as far as the road, where it ends above, next to a stone, going straight to the shrine I gave him that house to keep. No one is to say anything to him. And I give him an ox with an *escaramán*, and a metate, and a San Antonio, and a Virgen de la Concepción, and 5 pesos with which to make himself a home, and a field at the road going to the home of Molina, half as his property, and the other half I give to Josef Ramos, along with a metate, and a piece of land outside the place of Matías Hernández measuring 20 *quahuil* long and 10 *quahuil* wide, and I give half to Josef Ramos; there he is to make his home, and I give him 5 pesos and an ox that I gave him [already] with an *escaramán*, and a Virgen de los Remedios that he is to serve, and two rows of magueyes with their land, at the ravine. And [I give] two rows of magueyes with their land also to Felipe. = And to the one named Rosa María I give the house facing [north], the home of God, and another facing south, with the corral [or pen] where flowers are sown, and the land going with it, and that corral where the large animals sleep is always to stay as it is for all the brothers and sisters; they are to watch over it. And a [piece of land?]²⁴ at San Bernardino next to Verónica I give to Rosa María, and another piece of land outside the place of Nicolás Pascual, deceased, I leave to Rosa María, and another piece of land on the road to Zinacantepec that measures 20 *quahuil* long and is the same on all sides; I give it all to

²³ For the term *escaramán* see the comment made in Chapter Four; here it is found also in a note accompanying the testament of María Hernández, and in that case it appears for the first time with no connection with oxen.

²⁴ The reading "tlacatlantli" is not certain. Since "another" piece of land is referred to immediately after, this word must in some fashion describe a piece of land.

Rosa María, along with two rows of magueyes including the land, at the ravine. And I say that I leave to Tomás Josef this house with two [buildings], one a home of God facing west [and another] facing east, and another facing north, with [the corral] and the land going with [the house], with little magueyes; here he is to serve God our Lord and to take care of the house; [I give him] in addition a little piece of land in front of this house that I bought for 10 pesos; I give it all to him, along with an ox, a chest, an *escaramán*, a metate, and two rows of magueyes that are at the ravine. And to San Miguel de Aparicio I give two rows of magueyes that are here above; to Manuel Antonio I give that little piece of land where he planted magueyes as they are in a row; to San Juan de Dios I give three small magueyes; to Santo Cristo de la Vera Cruz I give two small magueyes; to the [cofradía of] the Animas Benditas of the Spaniards I give a small maguey; to the [cofradía of] the Sangre de Cristo I give two small magueyes; to San Nicolás of the Spaniards I give a small maguey, and to [Nuestra Señora de la] Merced a small maguey, and to San Antonio 3 small magueyes, and to [the cofradía of] Animas 1 maguey, to San Nicolás 2 magueyes, and to the Virgen de los Dolores 1 maguey. = And I say that the bells are to be rung for me at San Miguel, Santa Bárbara, and San Bernardino, and at the Calvario; an offering of half a real each is to be given. My will is to be carried out. = And I say that I greatly implore my two daughters, María Hernández and Rosa María, to be my executors. If they do it well, God will reward them. = And those were summoned before whom I made my testament, the witnesses, are don Matías de la Cruz, deputy governor; witness, Bernardino Bernardo; witness, Diego Pascual; witness, Pedro Domingo. Notary, Tomás de la Cruz.

Comments

This testament is not typical in its size and the amount of information it contains; its incredible wealth of data cannot be fully commented on here, so only some aspects are underlined. In addition, Elena de la Cruz is not at all a typical indigenous woman, being among the most evident examples of a wealthy and independent woman to have been found in the whole corpus of documents. All the details she mentions about her funeral

and burial are signs of high status: she declares that she has the means to be shrouded and girt with the rope of San Francisco; her burial is to be in the great church at the chapel of the Tercera Orden; a high mass is to be sung and bells are to be rung. In addition, she shows a great devotion to Catholic saints in general, bequeathing five images and leaving large donations to many more, to the *tlaxilacalli* saint San Miguel Aparicio in particular; the 130 pesos for a monstrance and the house complex bought for the same amount are exceptional. No less than 77 pesos of debts currently owed her are to go for San Miguel; they show her as a businesswoman on a large scale. Apart from the wealth she donates to pious causes, Elena has an impressive amount of real estate. Her lands seem to add up to 17 pieces, probably not absolutely all that would show on an inventory, but at least a minimum, some of it house lots, some scattered agricultural land, with at least one major maguey-producing plot. She has purchased some of the properties herself, and probably many of them. She owns at least two complexes of houses, one worth 130 pesos, an exceptional amount for a property owned by a rural indigenous person, plus at least seven oxen. Elena makes bequests to her children in a relatively equal way, though showing some preference for the heirs of her eldest son. If in her bequests she follows the usual pattern, more characteristic of her female independence is the preference she shows for the two daughters in naming them first in the list of her children, entrusting to them the worship of an image of San Miguel associated with an expensive monstrance, and above all in choosing them as her executors. It is also characteristic of her and of this whole line of independent women that she makes no mention of her marriage or of any man she had been married to.

A final remark on the orthography, which is quite conservative and more like the Valley of Mexico standard than many documents from the Toluca Valley at this time. The same is true of the word forms indicated, with a few exceptions such as the unusual written shape of the verb *chipahua*, 'to clean' (see footnote 12).

Document 2: Testamento de María Hernández, 1737

ma mosenquisCayecnehuan [sic] Ytlasomahuitocatzin yn dios tetatzin yhuan dios ytlapiltzin [sic] yhuan dios espirito Santo ma yn mochihua Amen Jesus ma[ri]a y Joseph Axcán miércoles A 20 de noBienBre yhua xiuhtlapohuali de = 1737 a[ños] nicpehualtia notestamento yn nehual notoca ma[ri]a hernandis nican nich[a]ne San miguel Aticpac ca niquitohuan yntla ytla tle nopan quimochihuilitzinos yn notlasomahuiztatzin dios ca huel ysenmactzincon niconnotlalilia yn noyoliantzin Ca yAxcatzin ma quihualmani [sic] ca oquimochihuili yhuan niquitohua yn canpa tocties yn notlalnayo [sic] ca onpa Calten [sic] terser orde onca nechmomachiotilis yhuan nitohuan [sic] yc quimiliuhtias yn notlalnacayo ca ye oncacqui ytlauitzin la uirje del carne yhuan yc ninolpitas ycordontzin San fran[cis]co yhuan motemacas meliotzin Santa Jerusalem neltis notlanequilis yhuan ypalehuiloca yes yn noAnimantzin mochihuas delijensia se misan cantada yhua niquitohua ynin cali ysticac ychantzin [sic] dios niccahuilia Ju[an] estasion yhuan oc se ysticac ylaquianpa [sic] tonatiuh mochi yca coral yhuan oc se cosinita yhua niquitohuan yca se pedaso tlali yhuilancauh cali meytoc mochi conanas Ju[an] estasio Amo aquichani [sic] yn mostla huictla yn canpa tistihui yhuan niquitohua la uirje de los dores [sic] mohuicas carne mochtzi Santos yhuan Santo²⁵ mocactzinohua calitic ca yhuatzin chanecatzitzitin onca quimotepanihuisque [sic] Ju[an] estasion yhuan ytlasonantzin ytoca polonian Antt[oni]a yhua niquitohuan niccahuilia oc se tlaltontli tepito niccahuilia Rafael Antt[oni]o onca Caltenpa huehucalco yhuan niquitohuan oc se pedaso onpa ycuipan [sic] caluario tlalmili calaqui sentlaxeloli tlaoli concahuisque yermano amo Aquitlanis ymostla huicta [sic] can tistihue [f. 2v] yhuan niquitohuan oc se tlali yc otli ychan molina tetep[...]tzin niquincahuilia oc sepa Ju[an] estasio yhuan rafael Antt[oni]o concahuisque amo Aquinchalanis y mostla huictl[...] yhuan niquitohuan y cuat²⁶ omochi notestamento onotzaloque testigos D[o]n seuastian fiscal teniente de la san [sic] yglesia testigo señor Ju[an] manuel serano yhuan yhuatzin [sic] yn noAluasea mesties ytocatzin nicolas

²⁵ The form should be 'Santas', according to the formula normally found in testaments.

²⁶ The *t* of 'cuat' can also be read as *s*; the intention is apparently 'qualli omochiuh', written by this writer possibly as 'quali omochi'.

saluador ca hue [sic] senca nicnotlatlauhtilia Ca yhuatzin [sic] nopan motlatoltzinos yntla cuali quimochihuilis ca dios quimotlachtlahuilmaquilis —

yhuan yehuatzin señor Ju[an] manuel Serano ca yehuatzin nopan motlatoltisque y mostla huictla —

Ess[criba]no marselo de la cruz

May the precious revered name of God the Father, God his precious Child, and God the Holy Spirit be entirely praised. May this be done, Amen. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Today, Wednesday the 20th of November in the year count of 1737, I begin my testament, I named María Hernández, resident²⁷ here in San Miguel Aticpac. I say that if my precious revered father God should bring something upon me, I place my spirit very entirely in his hands, for it belongs to him; may he come get it, for he made it. And I say that as to where my earthly body is to lie buried, it is at the entrance to [the chapel of the] Tercera Orden; there [a place] is to be designated for me. And I say that as to what my earthly body is to wrapped in, there is already a habit of the Virgen del Carmen, and I am to be girt in the rope of San Francisco. And half a real is to be given for Holy Jerusalem; my wish is to be realized. And the help of my soul will be that steps be taken for a high mass. And I say that I leave this house facing [east], the home of God, to Juan Estacio, along with another facing west, together with a corral and another little kitchen.²⁸ And I say that Juan Estacio is to take all of a piece of land going with the house, planted in magueyes. No one is to dispute with him in the future. And I say that the Virgen de los Dolores is to go [in the church of] Carmen.²⁹ All the [other] male and female saints are to stay in the house and be residents; Juan Estacio and his precious mother named Polonia Antonia are to serve them. And I say that I leave another little piece of land to Rafael Antonio, outside the patrimonial house. And I say that another piece behind the Calvario, a field into which one

²⁷ The Spanish translation has “natural”, native.

²⁸ By the usual disposition of buildings, we would expect the one facing west, opposite the ‘home of God’, to be the kitchen. The fact of the existence of ‘another little kitchen’ would seem to confirm it. Yet the Spanish translator says: “tengo vna casa y se compone de oratorio, sala y cosina.”

²⁹ Although the interpretation given seems the most likely, the syntax would allow others. The Spanish translator, however, says: “Nuestra Señora de los dolores se lleuara al carmen”.

measure³⁰ of maize fits, is to be shared by him and his brother. No one is to demand it from them in the future. [f. 2v] And I say that again I am leaving a little piece of land on the road to Molina's home to Juan Estacio and Rafael Antonio; they are to share it. No one is to dispute with them in the future. And I say that my testament was [well?] made. The witnesses called were don Sebastián, deputy fiscal of the holy church, and señor Juan Manuel Serrano as a witness, and the person named Nicolás Salvador is to be my executor; I very greatly implore him that he look after me; if he does it well, God will give him his reward. —

And señor Juan Manuel Serrano is also to look after me in the future. —

Notary Marcelo de la Cruz.

Comments

Like her mother, María Hernández is to be buried at the chapel of the Tercera Orden, a sign of continuity and of a strong relationship between mother and daughter. All the other details about funeral and burial are similar, apart from the ringing of bells, which is missing here. In addition, María Hernández requests a specific shroud, the habit of the Virgin of Carmen. Missing also are the mother's huge religious donations; it is curious to see that no reference is made to devotion to the *tlaxilacalli* saint, which had been so important for her mother. It is apparent that the mother was far wealthier than the daughter. Yet the daughter is by no means impoverished; continuity is shown through her property, for she bequeaths the house, land and magueyes that her mother had left her. She also possesses some land and images of saints that were not mentioned in her mother's testament, probably an acquisition through her marriage (which she, like her mother, fails to mention). Moreover, attached to the testament is a short memorandum in Spanish, in which some possessions not included in the actual will are listed, such as some cloaks, skirts, blouses, wool and cotton (enough perhaps to imply that she produced textiles for sale), some magueyes, a substantial maize supply, 4 pesos in cash, and some tools,

³⁰ The Spanish translator gives this as "vn quartillo".

including the *escaramán* that her mother had left her, although no mention is made of an ox.

The orthography of this document is quite close to the general central Mexican standard of the time, though it does show some of the specific traits of the Valley of Toluca, such as 'nehual' for 'nehuatl', 'I'; 'noAnimantzin' for 'nanimantzin', 'my soul'; 'oncacqui' for 'oncatqui', 'there is'. These forms represent evidence of weakening of final [tl], lack of certain elisions common in the Valley of Mexico, and [c] for [t] in syllable-final position.³¹ The reader of older Nahuatl documents must expect not only many variant orthographies but actual mistakes within a writer's own practice. The most common single mistake is the omission of one phonological syllable, often consisting of a consonant and a vowel. These forms have been highlighted with '[sic]' in the transcription here.

³¹ See Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 122-40, for a general discussion of the deviant tendencies in Valley of Toluca documents of this time.

Document 3: Testamento de María Josefa, 1737

Ma mocenquisCayectenehua yn itlaçomahuistoCatzin Dios tetatzin yhuan Dios ytlaçopilitzin yhua Dios Espirito Santo ma ye mochiua Ame Jesus maria y Josephen³² — AxCan jebes ynic Caxtoli tonatiuh mani Metzintli Angosto yhuan xiuhtlapohuali de 1737 años niquipehualtia notestamento nehuatl notoCa maria Josepha notlaxilaCalpan San miguel atiquipanqui yhua niquitohua ytla ocnechimotlaçotili y cenmanahuanqui y tlatohuani Dios Ca huel achtopan ycenmatzinco niContlalia noyoliatzin nanimatzin yhuan niquitohua yqui moquimilus y notlanaCayo [sic] ca ytlaquetzin la Virgen la mercen chipahuaqui çoçomatl³³ yhuan niquitohua yni Caltzintli monamaCatzin ypanpan tle niquitehuiquilia yteConpatzinCon frayn Domingo y quimonamaCatzin yhua niquitohua ytla ytla omocahui para nomisSan San mochiuatzin ypalehuiloCatzin noyoliatzin nanimatzin yhuan niquitohuan niquitehuiquilia opohuali yhuan yey p[eso]s 403 p[eso]s ypanpa tlachiquitli yhuan niquitohuan niquitehuiquilia Caxtoli yhua cen p[eso]s yhuan niquitohua niquinohuiquililia noConmagcre biestatzin [sic] niquinohuiquililia yenyey [sic] peso yhua nitohua [sic] noConnehui ytoca Juan quirisosto [sic] niquicahuilia sepohuali yhuan matlatli metotoli tepitoto yhuann oc oncen noConnehui ytoca Anttonio matrimonio natorialal [sic] niquicahuilia Antt[oni]o sepohuali yhuan matlatli metotoli tetepitoto yhua niquitohuan yehuatzin Roque de S[an]tta Ma[ri]a niquinocahuililia nonehui [sic] ytoca Juan quirisosto yhuan niquitohua Ca huel quimosanTzinlilitzin yhuan niquitohua Salbadro de Stigo no quimoSantzinlilitzin ypanpan ome tlaCatli quisantzinliz yhua niquitohua ca huel niquinotlatlatlaAuhtilia noAlbasea yehuantzin Salvador de Stigo yhua niquitohua ytla quali quimochihuiltzin Ca Dios quimotlaxitlahuiliz yhua niquitohua y noSepoltura yes Ca opan hue teopan calitiqui nechimomachiyotiliz Dios yhua niquitohua texipan omochihui notestameto testigo espanol S[eño]r fran[cis]co seRano testigo Nicolas dias testigo espanol Rafael Gonmix finis por este forma de ?

Nicolas diasi fines por este forma fran[cis]co seRano fines por este forma Rafael Gonmis es[criba]no mathias de la cruz

³² Numerous overbars over vowels in this document have been turned into 'n' without putting it in brackets.

³³ The term "çoçomatl" is apparently the equivalent of standard *tzotzomatli*, or 'cloth'.

May the precious revered name of God the father, God his precious child, and God the Holy Spirit be entirely praised. May it be done, amen. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. —

Today Thursday the 15th of the month of August in the year count of 1737, I begin my testament, I named María Josefa, of the *tlaxilacalli* of San Miguel Aticpac. And I say that when the universal ruler God has shown me his love [brought about my death], the very first of all I place my spirit and soul entirely in his hands, and I say that what my earthly body is to shrouded in is the habit of the Virgen de la Merced, a clean cloth. And I say that this house is to be sold on account of what I owe, at the orders of fray Domingo; he is the one who is to sell it. And I say that if anything is left for a mass for me, it is to be performed for the help of my spirit and soul. And I say that I owe 43 pesos³⁴ on account of the maguey harvesting [literally scraping], and I say that I owe another 16 pesos. I say that I owe to my *comadre* Vicenta 3 pesos, and I say that I leave to my child named Juan Crisóstomo 30 small magueyes, and to another child of mine named Antonio, of a common-law marriage, I leave 30 small magueyes. And I say to Roque de Santa María that I leave to him my child named Juan Crisóstomo, and I say he is to discipline him well³⁵, and I say that Salvador de Santiago is also to discipline him, so that two people will discipline him. And I say that I greatly implore my executor Salvador de Santiago [to accept the task], and I say that if he does it well God will reward him. And I say that my grave is to be at the great church³⁶, inside, [where] God designates [a place] for me. And I say that my testament was made before people: the Spanish witness señor Francisco Serrano, Nicolás Díaz, and the Spanish witness Rafael Gómez.³⁷ Nicolás Díaz. Francisco Serrano. Rafael Gómez.³⁸ Notary Matías de la Cruz.

³⁴ Despite the use of arabic numbers, the figure “403” for 43 retains something of the structure of the Nahuatl *ompohualli omei*, ‘forty plus three’.

³⁵ Literally it would be ‘shout at him’. The Spanish translator has “que lo cuyde y le enseñe loables costumbres”.

³⁶ The Spanish translation has “en la parrochia de esta Ciudad”.

³⁷ By his name the middle witness is most likely a Spaniard as well, though we cannot be sure. The Spanish translator took it that all three witnesses were Spanish.

³⁸ Each of the three signatures, actually copied out by the notary with an appropriate rubric for each one, is preceded by a phrase in garbled Spanish which I have not managed to understand fully. It appears to be “fines por este forma” (once ‘finis’), with in one case ‘de’ added at the end. Possibly “forma” was for ‘firma’, ‘signature’. The main Spanish formulas used at this point were ‘por testigo’, ‘as a witness’, y ‘lo firmé por él a su ruego’, ‘I signed for him at his request’. The Spanish translation ignores the three phrases.

Comments

Compared to the two previous documents, María Josefa's testament has fewer details on funeral and burial. A particular aspect is that she wishes to be shrouded in the unusual habit of the Virgen de la Merced, the only example in the whole corpus of testaments. Her burial is to be in the great church, but no mention is made of the chapel of the Tercera Orden. Given that her house is to be sold to pay her debts, María Josefa is left with practically no property apart from a great number of magueyes, which along with the great size of the debts hint at her large-scale involvement in the cultivation and production of alcoholic beverages; that, indeed, must have been her major activity. Despite her present economic emergency, her general status must have been high; that all the witnesses are Spanish is a sign of it. Worthy of note is the mention of a common-law marriage, which was eliminated in the Spanish translation. The father, however, is not mentioned, nor is María Josefa's marriage to Adrián Josef, of Document 4, who had died four years previously. An interesting detail is the appearance in the document of a member of the local clergy, friar Domingo, in the function of a person entrusted with the important and delicate task of taking care of the sale of valuable property; curiously, there is no mention of him in the Spanish translation. And as far as the notary is concerned, here as in the two previous documents his name is de la Cruz, a prominent name in the Toluca area, and also of course the name of Elena de la Cruz and some of her children.

The orthography of this document is much more deviant from the Valley of Mexico standard than any of the others here. Particularly, it shows a strong tendency to insert an *i* for an apparently spoken [i] that appeared after what would have been a weak syllable-final vowel, thus preserving it. Among the many examples are 'ytlaçopilitzin' for 'ytlaçopiltzin', 'his precious child'; 'quimosanTzinlilitzin' for 'quimotzatziliz', 'he is to discipline him'. Despite these pronounced deviances, the orthography preserves some

details of the Valley of Mexico standard, such as 'nehuatl', 'I', and 'nanimatzin', 'my soul'.³⁹

³⁹ See Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 122-40.

Document 4: Testamento de Adrián Josef, 1733

Ma mocenquizcayectenehua yn itlaçomahuiztocatzin in Dios tetahtzin yhuan Dios ytlaçopiltzin yhuan Dios. Esp[irit]u Santo Ma in mochihua Amen Jesus = Axcán Jueves ye ic Macuili tonatiuh mani Metztli Marzo, yhuan Xiuhtlapohualli de 1733 años Nicchihua. noMemoria yn Nehuatl, Adrian Joseph. Casado yca Maria Josepha; notlahxilacalpa San Miguel Aticpac, Ca huel ninoCocotica Niquitohua ytlá moztla huip [sic] ninomiquiliz Ca huel acachtapa i noyolian Nanimantzin Ca ycenmac[tzin]co niconlalia yn notlaçomahuiztahtzin Dios; Ma quihualmanili Ca ytlachihualtzin: Auh in notlalnacayo Ca ytech nicpohua yn tlalli, ca ytech oquiz yc Ochihualoc = yhuan niquitohua; yn Nosepultura yez Ca ompa huey teopa ythualco yc yxpan[tzin]co teocalli. Tercera Orden. onca toctiez yn notlalnacayo. intla oninomiquili = yhuan niquitohua yn ipalehuiloca yez Nanimantzin Ce Missa Cantada nopampa Mochihuaz = yhuan Santa Jerusalem motemacaz Meliotzin huentzintli; yhua Niquitohua ce Nopiltzin ytoca Juan Chrisostomo NicCahuililia Ce la Virgen Santissima de la Assumpcion, de Lienzo. quimopielia ome baras. yhuan yehuatzin San Joseph, de Lienzo quimopielia ce bara yhuan Ce quarto. mochi nicnoCahuililia nopiltzin = yhuan niccahuilia Ce yolcatl. Cauallo yca ynechichihual; yhuan niquitohua yn itoca Gabriel ymontzin Juan Ramos. Nechhuiquilia Mahtlactomin: yhuan niquitohua Ca huel nicnotlatlauhtilia yehuatzin, Antt[oni]o de la cruz Ramires ca yehuatzin noAlbacea, metztiez. nopan motlahtoliz, intla yuhqui quimochihuiliz ca Dios. quimotlaxtlahuilmaquiliz. yhuan ynic onicchiuh noMemoria Onotzaloque testigos. Don Marcos Manuel. yhuan Don Diego Pasqual = Domingo Lazaro =

Escriuano Bernardo de Santiago

May the precious revered name of God the father, God his precious child, and God the Holy Spirit be entirely praised. May this be done, Amen. Jesus. = Today, Thursday the 5th day of the month of March in the year count of 1733, I make my memorandum [of testament], I Adrián Josef, married to María Josefa, of the *tlaxilacalli* of San Miguel Aticpac, for I am very sick. I say that if I die in the future, the very first of all I place my

spirit and soul entirely in the hands of my precious revered father God; may he come to take it, for it was created by him. And my earthly body I assign to the earth, for from it it came and of it it was made. = And I say that my grave is to be at the great church, in the patio [churchyard], facing the chapel of the Tercera Orden; there my earthly body is to lie buried when I have died. And I say that the aid of my soul is to be a high mass to be performed for me = And half a real is to be given as an offering for Holy Jerusalem. And I say that I leave to my child named Juan Crisóstomo a Virgen Santísima de la Asunción, on canvas, measuring two *varas*, and a San José on canvas, measuring a *vara* and a quarter; I leave it all to my child. And I leave him a beast, a horse with its gear. And I say that a person named Gabriel, the son-in-law of Juan Ramos, owes me 10 reales. And I say that I greatly implore Antonio de la Cruz Ramírez, who is to be my executor, to speak for me [look after my affairs]; if he does it God will give him his reward. And I made my memorandum before witnesses who were called, don Marcos Manuel, don Diego Pascual, and Domingo Lázaro.

Notary Bernardo de Santiago.

Comments

Adrián Josef requests burial in the churchyard, facing the chapel of the Tercera Orden, not inside the chapel, but still the connection with the burial place of Elena de la Cruz and María Hernández may be there. He mentions no house or land, so apparently he has been living in the house of his wife María Josefa of Document 3; however, he has some expensive possessions, such as a horse and two large paintings of saints. He bequeaths them to his son Juan Crisóstomo, who at this time was still a small child, according to his wife's testament some years later, but Adrián Josef leaves nothing to her to take care of the child. Indeed, it is rare that a husband leaves nothing to his wife when she has to look after a small child; this may show that María Josefa was already well off on the side of her family, so she did not need any support; or that the couple had some trouble, perhaps related to the fact that María Josefa had another child outside marriage, Antonio.

In terms of orthography, this will is the most carefully done and the closest to the Valley of Mexico standard of the four reproduced here. It is also conservative in its conventions; for example, it mainly preserves [z] for syllable-final [s] as in Stage 2, and it partially retains the older method of punctuating by putting a period or comma after short phrases. The only hint in the orthography that the document is from the Toluca Valley is 'nicontlalia', 'I place it', which in the Valley of Mexico would be 'nocontlalia'.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See Lockhart, *Nahuas and Spaniards*, pp. 122-40.

Glossary of Nahuatl Terms¹

Altepetl: any independent socio-political unit, state; more specifically, the local ethnic states in central Mexico that the Spanish would call 'pueblos', and that became municipalities after the conquest.

Callalli: house-land, arable land pertaining to a house complex and not separable from it.

Calli: house, either an entire complex of houses or any of the buildings included in it.

Calmecac: preconquest Nahua school where the children of the nobility were taught to become priests or high officials.

Cempaxochitl, from **cempohualxochitl:** marigold.

-Chan²: one's home.

Cihuacalli: woman-house, precise meaning not well established.

-Cihuamon: one's daughter-in-law.

Cihuatlatquitl: woman property, all the household and other objects she normally works with.

Copalli: copal incense.

Cuezcomatl: grainbin.

Huentli: offering.

Huipil: a woman's traditional blouse.

Ichantzincó Dios: the main residence of a household complex, including an altar for the saints; it corresponds to the Spanish *oratorio*, oratory.

-Ichpochton: one's small daughter.

Lamantzin, from **ilamatzin:** old woman.

Macehualli, pl. **macehualtin:** commoner(s); in the time of this study it is used to mean an indigenous person or persons.

¹ The terminology for kinship that has been illustrated through the diagrams is not reported here.

² The terms that have a hyphen are usually found in the possessive form.

Memilli: field of magueys.

Metlatl: grinding stone; **metate** is a Spanish derivation commonly used in the text of this work.

Metl: maguey.

Miccatepoztl: literally dead person metal object; a variant of *tepoztl*, bell.

Milli: cultivated field.

-Mon: one's son-in-law.

-Nacayo: one's body.

Namique: married person.

Oquichtli: a male.

Pilli, pl. pipiltin: indigenous noble(s).

Popochtli: perfumed smoke.

Quahuatl: literally a stick; a unit of measure for land, often approximating seven to ten English feet.

Quauhxicalli: wooden container.

Santocalli: saint-house, a building inside a household complex where the images of the saints are kept.

Telpochcalli: preconquest Nahuatl school where the children of commoners were taught.

-Telpochton: one's small son.

Teoyotica –coneuh: one's godchild, literally one's child through holy things.

Tepancalli: enclosure.

Tepoztl: literally metal object, here it means bell.

Ticitl: healer, physician.

Tlacatl: person, human being.

Tlalli: land in general.

-Tlallo -çoquio: literally one's earth, one's clay, another form to refer to one's body.

Tlalmilli: field, literally land-field; the difference from simple *milli*, field, is not well established.

-Tlalnacayo: one's earthly body.

Tlaolli: shelled maize.

-Tlaquatequil: one's godchild, literally one's person who is baptised.

-Tlaquentzin, from *tlaquemitl* or *tlaquentli*: habit, garment.

Tlatequipanoa: to serve.

Tlaxilacalli: a territorial and socio-political unit, constituent part of an *altepetl*.

Tonantzin: Our Mother, the mother goddess.

Topile: literally one with a staff; often constable, but also any middle-level official with specific duties; here, an indigenous religious official who acted as an aide to parish priest.

Yacapantli: the eldest (of a set of children).

-Yolia: one's spirit.

Xinachtli: seed.

Xochitl: flower.

Xocoyotl: the youngest (of a set of children).

Xolal: lot (from the Spanish *solar*).

Sources

The primary sources used for this thesis come from various archives. The major corpus of documents was found in the Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México (Mexico City), where the *Libros de visitas* and the *Libros de gobierno* of the archbishops are kept. More than 500 cases covering litigation, *diligencias matrimoniales*, and testaments in Nahuatl have been considered; these form part of the documentation issued by the *Juzgado Eclesiástico* of Toluca. During the research, these documents were being classified and the catalogue has only just been completed.¹

The Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City) has also been used for a variety of purposes. Cases related to marriage and morality in the Toluca Valley were found in the documentation of the *Provisorato de Indios y Chinos*, which is scattered in different branches, mainly in Matrimonios, Civil and Criminal. Also, testaments in Nahuatl from the branches Civil, Hospital de Jesús and Tierras have been used, and the section Clero regular y secular has been consulted for some information on the local clergy and the archbishops of Mexico who were in charge at the time studied. A miscellaneous branch is Bienes nacionales, where censuses, documents related to the appointment of ecclesiastical judges, and accusations of abuse against the clergy have been found.

Sermons and pastoral letters from the archbishops have been found in the Biblioteca Nacional de México (Mexico City), LAFRAGUA collection. The Fondo Franciscano of the Biblioteca was also explored for cases of indigenous complaints against clergy's abuses in the Toluca Valley.

¹ Gustavo Watson Marrón, Gilberto González Merlo, Berenise Bravo Rubio, and Marco Antonio Pérez Iturbe, *Guía de documentos novohispanos del Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México* (Mexico City: Arquidiócesis Primada de México, 2002).

The catalogue of the Archivo de Notaría of Toluca was also searched for information on the indigenous population, in order to evaluate the opportunity of researching in the archive of Toluca proper, but no relevant documents were found.²

Finally, in the UK, the section of manuscripts of the British Library was used for some catechisms and confessionals.

Abbreviations

AHAM	Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México (Mexico City)
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City)
AGNBN	Archivo General de la Nación, Bienes nacionales
AGNCi	Archivo General de la Nación, Civil
AGNCr	Archivo General de la Nación, Criminal
AGNCRS	Archivo General de la Nación, Clero regular y secular
AGNHJ	Archivo General de la Nación, Hospital de Jesus
AGNI	Archivo General de la Nación, Inquisición
AGNM	Archivo General de la Nación, Matrimonios
AGNT	Archivo General de la Nación, Tierras
AGNV	Archivo General de la Nación, Vínculos
BNM LAF	Biblioteca Nacional de México, Lafragua Collection (Mexico City)
BL MSS	British Library Manuscripts (London)

² María Elena Bribiesca Sumano, Guadalupe Yolanda Zamudio Espinoza, and Hilda Lagunas Ruiz, *Catalogo de protocolos notaría n°.1 de Toluca 1634-1761*, volume 7 (Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de México, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, 1995).

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